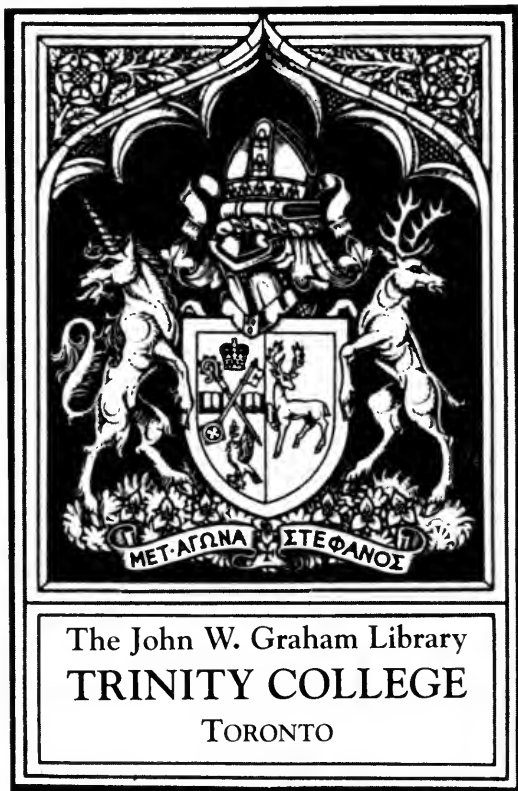


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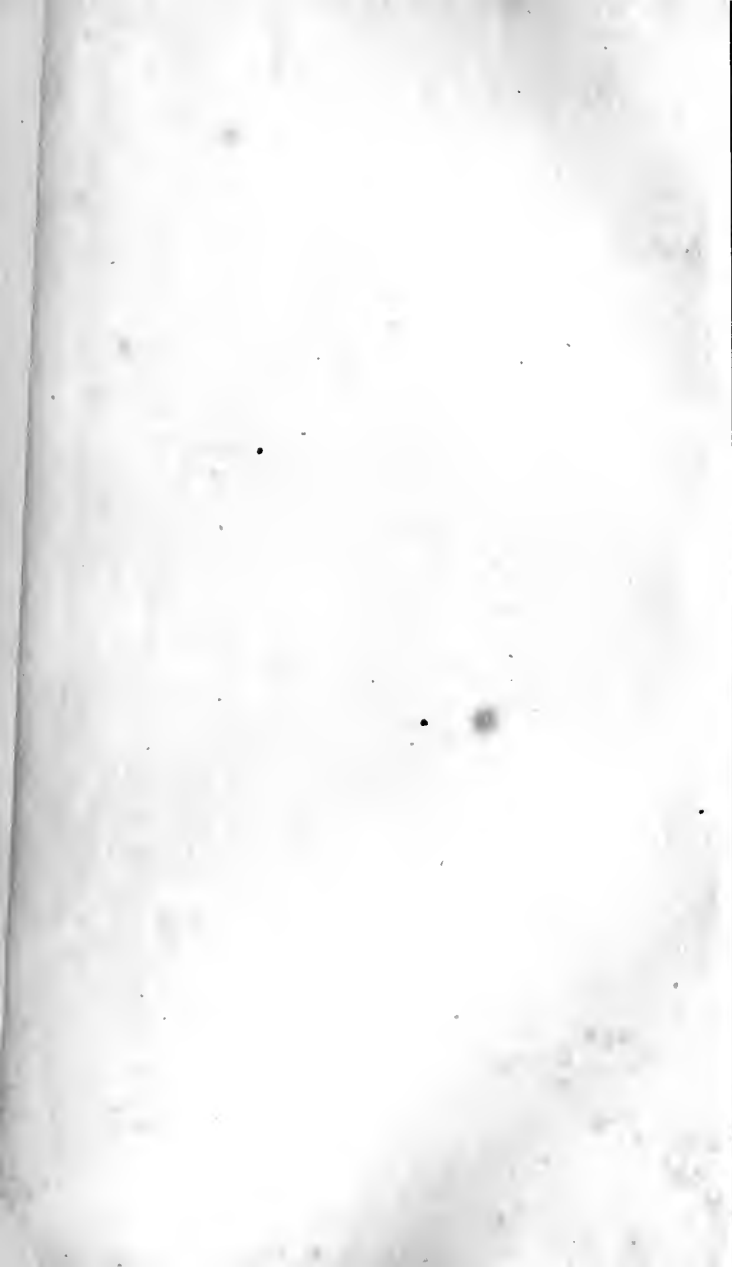


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HELP TO THE READING

OF

THE BIBLE.

BY THE LATE
BENJAMIN ELLIOTT NICHOLLS, M.A.
OF QUEEN'S COLLEGE, CAMBRIDGE,
CURATE OF ST. JOHN'S, WALTHAMSTOW,
AUTHOR OF "THE BOOK OF PROVERBS EXPLAINED AND ILLUSTRATED
FROM HOLY SCRIPTURE."

"Search the Scriptures."—JOHN v. 39.



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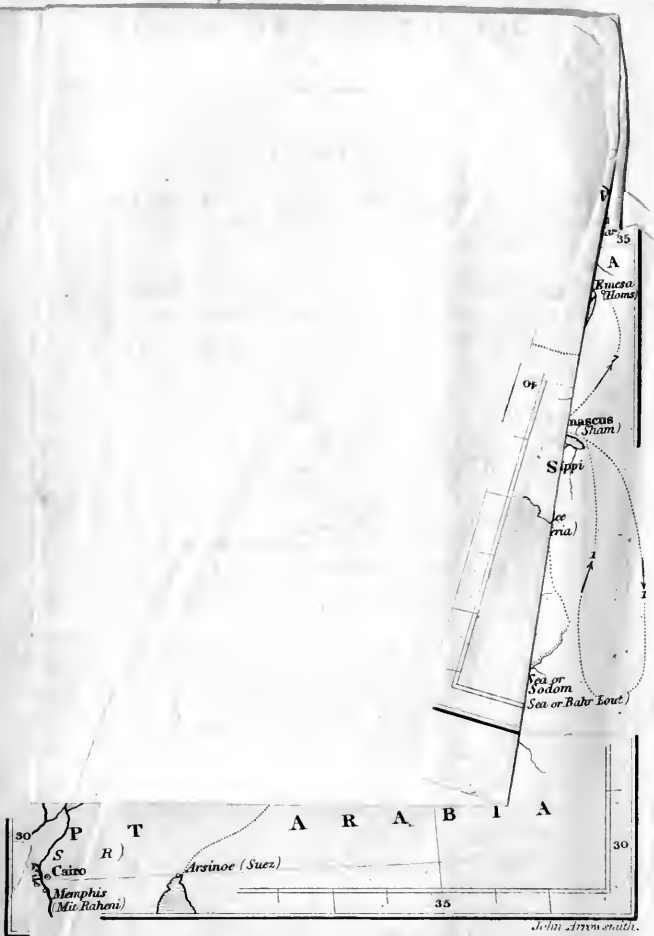
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HELP

TO



HELP

TO

THE READING OF THE BIBLE.

INTRODUCTION.

“Sanctify the Lord God in your hearts; and be ready always to give an answer to every man that asketh you a reason of the hope that is in you with meekness and fear.”—1 PET. iii. 15.

THIS little work cannot lay claim to originality. It is chiefly composed of hints selected from the works of others, which have not been in all cases distinctly referred to. Nor must the reader expect a full and detailed account of such knowledge as may be required for a profitable study of the Scriptures. The object of the author has been merely to give such a view of the Sacred Volume, as may, through the Divine blessing, awaken a desire to “search the Scriptures^a,” and assist those who are making a first effort to do so.

The practical benefit to be derived from the Holy Scriptures depends upon the disposition of mind in which we read them. Under this conviction the general plan pursued is this:—

First, *To remind the reader of the Divine authority of the Bible, by noticing some of the evidences, by which it is proved to be the word of God;*

Secondly, *To explain the purpose for which the Bible was given to mankind;*

Thirdly, *To show the manner in which that purpose has been fulfilled;*

Fourthly, *To give some general remarks on the interpretation of the Bible;*

^a John v. 39. See also Acts xvii. 11.

Fifthly, [*The Jews being the people through whom God communicated his will to man*] To offer a slight sketch of their government, their form of worship, their different sects, &c.;

Sixthly, To give a short account of the Books of the Old and New Testament, with such a notice of their contents as may in some measure illustrate the previous remarks.

The author, some time ago, published a tract called *Sunday Exercises on the Morning and Evening Services of the Church*: and the use which has been made of it has suggested to him the attempt to form what may be used as an exercise on the Bible. To those who may use it in the instruction of the young, it is strongly recommended that the substance of each section should be reduced to questions, and written answers required.

Bishop Horne remarks: "When we study the writings of men, it is well if, after much pains and labour, we find some particles of truth amongst a great deal of error: when we read *the Scriptures*, all we meet with is truth. In the former case we are like the Africans on the Gold Coast; of whom it is said that they dig pits nigh the water-falls of mountains abounding in gold; then, with incredible pains and industry, wash off the sand till they espy at the bottom two or three shining grains of metal, which only just pay their labour. In the latter case we work in a mine sufficient to enrich ourselves and all about us."—The object of this work is to draw the reader to this mine, and just to loosen its surface for him.

• Bishop Jewel says: "The Scriptures are manna given to us from Heaven, to feed us in the desert of this world." May this little work be made the means of endearing these Scriptures to the reader; so that, being led to partake of the Bread of Life, he may eat and live for ever!

PART I.

CHAPTER I.

ON THE DIVINE AUTHORITY OF THE BIBLE.

CONTENTS.—§ i. *The Preservation of the Bible.* § ii. *The Moral Effects of the Bible.* § iii. *The Agreement of the several parts with each other.* § iv. *The Spirit of the Writers.* § v. *The Prophecies of the Bible—proving it to be the Word of God.*

WHAT IS THE BIBLE? is the first question which suggests itself to us, when we are invited to study it.

The Bible, then, is a collection of books written, as we believe, by inspiration of God. But if this be the answer to the question, the right use, and even, in a great degree, the right understanding of the volume, will depend on the disposition in which we read it^b. For if the Bible is the Word of God, we ought to read it in the same frame of mind, and with the same solemn thoughts, as if God were speaking to each of us.

The first point therefore to be made out is the Divine authority of the Holy Scriptures. It is not, however, the object of this chapter to enter into any detailed proof of this question, but only to remind the reader of some of those remarkable circumstances by which the Bible is distinguished from all other books. Among these may be first noticed, what (till the attention had been drawn a little to the subject) might not appear such, its *Preservation*.

§ i. *The Preservation of the Bible.*

1. *The Bible contains the oldest books in the world*; the first portions of it, which are the foundation of all the rest, having been written 3300 years ago; that is to say, nearly 1000 years earlier than any other history which we have.

Herodotus and Thucydides, the oldest profane historians whose writings have reached our times, were contemporary with Ezra and Nehemiah, the last of the historians of the

^b Bishop Butler, in writing upon this subject, refers to the following texts (see Analogy, Part ii. chap. iv.); Dan. xii. 10; Isa. xxix. 13, 14; Matt. vi. 23; xi. 25; xiii. 11, 12; John iii. 19; v. 44; 1 Cor. ii. 14; 2 Cor. iv. 4; 2 Tim. iii. 13.

Old Testament. Between them and Moses, the writer of the first five books of the Bible, there is an interval of nearly 1000 years. The Poems of Homer and Hesiod are somewhat more ancient than the history of Herodotus, but they were written nearly 600 years after the time of Moses.

This fact will appear the more remarkable, if we consider these two points:—

(1.) The Jews, who had the care of these books, were at different periods of their history a very despised and oppressed people. See an account of their treatment from the Midianites, Judges vi. 2—6; from the Philistines, 1 Sam. xiii. 20; from the Syrians, 2 Kings xiii. 7, &c.; from the Egyptians, 2 Chron. xii. 2—9; and particularly from the Assyrians, 2 Kings xvii. 6, and the Chaldeans, 2 Kings xxiv. xxv.; 2 Chron. xxxvi.; Jer. lii.

During their seventy years' captivity in Babylon, their temple was burnt; the very ark, in which the original copy of the Law had been kept, was destroyed; all the glory of the Jewish worship perished, and their city being laid waste, continued in that state for more than a hundred years. (Neh. ii. 17.) But, even in this captivity, we have traces of the preservation of their Scriptures. (Dan. ix. 2; Neh. viii. 1; 2 Maccab. ii. 13.) Antiochus Epiphanes, when he took Jerusalem, murdered about 40,000 of its inhabitants, sold as many more to be slaves, and ordered, that whoever was found with the Book of the Law should be put to death; and every copy of it that could be found was burnt. (1 Maccab. i. 56, 57.) Yet even in this fiery trial, which lasted three years, the Scriptures were preserved. (1 Maccab. i. 63; ii. 27.)

(2.) The constant disposition of the Jews to idolatry before the Babylonish captivity was calculated, humanly speaking, to endanger the safety of the Sacred Volume. Jezebel, the wife of a king of Israel, attempted the utter destruction of the prophets of the Lord^c, and with them, as a necessary consequence, of the Sacred Books; and so far, indeed, did these and similar^d attempts succeed, that in a subsequent period of their history, Josiah, a pious king of Judah, and Hilkiyah, the high priest, were destitute of an authentic copy of the Scriptures, until the latter found

^c 1 Kings xviii. 4.

^d Matt. xxiii. 34.

it in the house of the Lord. See 2 Kings xxii. 8; 2 Chron. xxxiv. 14.

Under these circumstances, is it not remarkable that the Scriptures of the Jews are translated into more than a hundred languages, and many millions of copies of them are now in circulation; while, if we except a few works of the Egyptians, which no one can yet decipher with certainty, not a single book of the most flourishing and civilized nations (as the Chaldeans, Phœnicians, &c.), who lived at the same time with them, has reached us?

2. *The Bible has been preserved unaltered.*

As to that part of the Bible, written *before* the coming of our blessed Lord, called the Old Testament, the following facts are to be borne in mind:—

(1.) A copy of the five books of Moses, called the *Pentateuch*, was made by the Samaritans, who, after the Babylonish captivity (more than 500 years before Christ), became the rooted enemies of the Jews, so that any agreement between the two copies cannot be considered as the work of design. See Ezra iv. 1—4; John iv. 9; viii. 48, &c.

(2.) Nearly 300 years before Christ, a translation of the Old Testament into Greek, the language then most generally understood, was begun by order of Ptolemy Philadelphus, king of Egypt, and in subsequent reigns was completed and widely circulated.

(3.) On comparing this Hebrew Samaritan Pentateuch, and this Greek translation, called the Septuagint, we find them substantially to agree with each other and with our Bible.

(4.) Such was the impression on the mind of the Jews of the Divine origin of their Scriptures, that, according to the statements of Philo and Josephus, they would suffer any torments, or even endure death itself, rather than change a single point or iota of them: and a law was enacted by the Jews, which denounced him to be guilty of inexpressible sin who should presume to make the slightest alteration in their Sacred Books. They have never dared to annex to them any historical narrative since the death of their last prophet Malachi. They closed the Sacred Volume with the succession of their prophets.

(5.) Our Lord declared the Old Testament (as the

Jews possessed it in his time) to be the Word of God^e; He adopted^f the threefold division of it into the Law, the Prophets, and the Psalms, which the Jews adopt, to comprehend all the Old Testament as we now have it: and though He frequently charged the Jews with making the Word of God of none effect by their traditions, He never accused them of corrupting the text.

(6.) The books of the Old Testament which we receive as canonical, are acknowledged by both Jews and Christians to be those which existed in our Saviour's time: and by the confession of both parties, they have been handed down to us uncorrupted and unchanged. There are now extant nearly 1150 manuscripts of the Old Testament in the original language—and they have been proved by Dr. Kennicott and other learned Hebrew scholars, to agree with each other in all essential points.

As to that part of the Bible written *after* the coming of our Lord, called the New Testament, it is important to remember these considerations:—

(1.) It was very widely circulated, so that any alteration would have been quickly discovered; for, before the middle of the second century, the greater part of the books of which it is composed were read in every Christian assembly; and we have the testimony, not only of Christian, but also of heathen writers (as Tacitus and Pliny, for instance), that there were then vast multitudes of Christians throughout the world.

(2.) These writings were held in the highest reverence; were received as a Divine rule of faith and conduct—received as such, to the rejection of many others pretending to inspiration (as the gospel of Valentinian, and of Marcion, &c.), and even to the exclusion of those written by eminent Christians, as the Epistle of Clement, &c.—received as Divine by those who were called upon to lay down their lives in proof of their belief, and who, therefore, would exercise the greatest jealousy over the preservation of those writings unaltered. Thus we learn from Tertullian and Jerome, that when a Presbyter of Asia had published a spurious piece under the name of Paul, he was immediately convicted, and notice of the forgery was soon conveyed to

^e Mark vii. 13.

^f Luke xxiv. 44.

Carthage and to the Churches of Africa.—See Jones' Canon of Scripture, Part I. ch. v.

(3.) The New Testament is more quoted than any other book in the world, by a succession of writers from the very time it was written to the present day, and those quotations agree with our Scriptures.—Among the earliest of these writers may be noticed Clement, Bishop of Rome, mentioned by St. Paul^g; Ignatius, appointed by the Apostles Bishop of Antioch about A.D. 70; Polycarp, Bishop of Smyrna, who had conversed with many that had seen Christ; Irenæus, Bishop of Lyons in France, who had been instructed by Polycarp; Theophilus, Bishop of Antioch; Clement of Alexandria; Origen his disciple; Augustin, Bishop of Hippo in Africa; Athenagoras, the Athenian philosopher; and the Epicurean philosopher Celsus, a bitter enemy of Christianity, who lived in the second century. The writings of this last-named author are preserved to us in those of Origen; and the particulars he mentions of our Lord's life would almost form an abridgment of the Evangelists' history as we now have it in the Gospels.

(4.) Very ancient manuscripts of the New Testament are extant, which, though made in different and distant countries, vary but little from each other. The Alexandrian MS. now in the British Museum, and the Vatican MS., each containing nearly all both of the Old and New Testament in the Greek language, were written probably in the 4th or 5th century.—Among the ancient Versions of the New Testament may be mentioned the Syriac, Egyptian, Arabic, Ethiopian, Armenian, Persian, Gothic, Slavonic, Anglo-Saxon, and the Latin Vulgate.

(5.) As, before the coming of our Lord, the enmity of the Jews and the Samaritans was overruled to the preservation of the Old Testament unaltered; so, since his advent, the enmity of Jews and Christians, and the divisions of Christians amongst themselves, have prevented any corruption of the New Testament. For no alteration could have been attempted by one, which would not have been quickly detected by another party^h.

^g Phil. iv. 3.

^h The preceding remarks do not apply to the Apocrypha, which is no part of the canon of Scripture. The last council of Trent, held in

"Cities fall," says Bishop Jewel, "kingdoms come to nothing, empires fade away as the smoke. Where is Numa, Minos, Lycurgus? where are their books? what has become of their laws?" But that this Book "no tyrant," as he remarks, "should have been able to consume, no tradition to choke, no heretic maliciously to corrupt;" that it should stand unto this day, amid the wreck of all that is human, without the alteration of one sentence so as to change the doctrine taught therein; surely, here is a very singular providence, claiming our attention in a most remarkable manner. See 1 Pet. i. 24, 25; Prov. xxi. 30; Matt. xxiv. 35.

§ ii. *The Moral Effects of the Bible.*

The Bible is an instrument in the hand of God for imparting his grace to mankindⁱ, and is like other instruments of his providence, progressive in its effects. But if to us, who "see through a glass darkly^k," who "are of yesterday and know nothing^l," these effects do not appear to the extent which we should have supposed, we must be cautioned, as Paley remarks, neither to charge the religion, which the Bible teaches, with consequences for which it is not responsible, nor to look for its influence in the wrong place. Before the introduction of Christianity, the superiority of the Jews to the heathen world is mainly to be attributed to their possessing the oracles of God; and since that period the effects of the Bible on society have been still more marked, in mitigating the horrors of war, abolishing polygamy, suppressing the impurities of religious rites, and the combats of gladiators, which,

the year 1550, under Pope Pius IV., presumed to call it so; but it was never considered as sacred by the Jews, was never alluded to by our Lord or his Apostles, and is not in the catalogue of Sacred Books given by the Fathers during the first four centuries; so that, as Bishop Burnet says, we have the concurrent sense of the whole Church on the matter. The Apocryphal books were read in the Church after the fourth century; but Jerome expressly informs us, "they were read for example of life and instruction of manners, but were not applied to establish any doctrine," plainly implying they had no Divine authority. Our own Church still commands them to be publicly read: and, in her 6th Article, quotes the words of Jerome, in order to show in what manner they are to be received.

ⁱ John xvii. 17.

^k 1 Cor. xiii. 12.

^l Job viii. 9.

according to the assertion of Lipsius, sometimes cost Europe 20,000 or 30,000 lives in a month. But, as Paley further remarks, the influence of the Bible is to be sought for, not so much in the councils of princes, in the debates or resolutions of popular assemblies, in the conduct of governments towards their subjects, or of states and sovereigns towards one another, of conquerors at the head of their armies, or of parties intriguing for power at home, (topics which almost alone occupy the attention, and fill the pages of history,) as in the silent course of private and domestic life^m, and in the yet more private regulation of the heartⁿ. Here have ever been its great triumphs^o. Nor should it be forgotten, that the fact of the beneficial effects of the Bible not being universal, is an additional evidence of the truth of its own declarations. See Heb. iv. 2; 2 Thess. iii. 2; 2 Cor. iv. 3; 2 Pet. iii. 3; 2 Tim. iii. 1—5.

Thus much, however, may be safely said, that through the preaching and reading of its great truths, effects have been produced quite peculiar to itself,—that it is “quick and powerful, and sharper than any two-edged sword^p,” not only changing men’s opinions, but producing a total alteration of their character, their principles, their motives, and their conduct. In illustration of this, observe the conduct of Josiah and his subjects, as related in 2 Kings xxii. 11, and 2 Chron. xxxiv. 30—33; and contrast what is there said of the people, with the description given of them, in the preceding reign, by Zephaniah (iii. 1—7).

The effect of a serious study of the Holy Scriptures is shown by the case of the Jews, as recorded in the 8th and 13th chapters of Nehemiah; and by the case of the Bereans, as related in the Acts of the Apostles (xvii. 11, 12).

St. Paul relates what occurred at Corinth^q and Ephesus^r, and St. Peter what effect was produced in Pontus, Galatia, and other places, nearly 1800 years ago^s. In a most dissolute age, and under the worst government, the primitive Christians, once as dissolute as others, attained in every virtue to an eminence of which there is no example

^m 1 Cor. i. 28, 29.

James ii. 5.

ⁿ Luke xvii. 21.

^o See Paley’s Evid. pt. iii. ch. vii.

^p Heb. iv. 12.

^q 1 Cor. vi. 10, 11.

^r Eph. iv. 19; ii. 1.

^s 1 Pet. iv. 3.

in the history of mankind. Such indeed was the debasing influence of heathenism, that the characters of the most celebrated philosophers were stained with gross crime (see Xenophon's *Memor.* l. i. c. 2; Cicero *de Nat. Deor.* lib. 1. § 28, and various other passages quoted by Macknight on *Rom.* i.†); but in those who sincerely embraced Christianity a total alteration of character was produced.

Justin the Martyr, who was educated a heathen philosopher, and flourished about the middle of the second century, in his celebrated *Apology*, presented to the Emperor Trajan, says, "We, who formerly delighted in adultery; now observe the strictest chastity; we, who used the charms of magic, have devoted ourselves to the true God; and we, who valued money and gain above all things, now cast what we have in common, and distribute to every man according to his necessities." This regard for the poor and needy is the more remarkable, because heathen philosophy affected to treat them with contempt. Neither a hospital, nor an almshouse, nor any similar provision for the poor, was known in the pagan and philosophic world.

Tertullian, born at Carthage, in Africa, the first Latin writer of the Church whose works have come down to us, and who lived about sixty years after Justin, makes the same public appeal. Revenge was one of the virtues of heathenism; but of Christians he says, "we now render to no man evil for evil." The same writer speaks of vast multitudes throughout the whole extent of the Roman empire having been the subjects of this great change.

Origen, born at Alexandria in Egypt, in his reply to Celsus, written about A.D. 246, and Lactantius, who was appointed preceptor to the Roman emperor Constantine, were able to make similar appeals: and in confirmation of the justice of such appeals, even the Emperor Julian, nephew of Constantine, after he became an apostate from the faith, in an epistle to Arsacius, a heathen priest (written A.D. 361), held up Christians to the imitation of pagans, on account of the sanctity of their lives, and their love not only to strangers, but to enemies. And as it was at Corinth, Pontus, Galatia, Rome, Carthage, and Alexandria, so now, through the influence of the truths taught

† See also *Grot. de Verit.* b. ii. § xviii.

us in Scripture, adulterers, thieves, and drunkards, overcome their bad habits, becoming chaste, honest, and sober. The headstrong become gentle, the proud humble, the covetous generous, the cruel merciful. Where hatred, variance, emulations, wrath, strife, and envyings prevailed, there are love, joy, peace, long-suffering, gentleness, goodness, meekness, temperance; and that not only in civilized but even in the most barbarous countries.

Where St. Paul's church in London, and St. Peter's in Westminster, now stand, there, as Bishop Jewel remarks, were the temples of Diana and Apollo. "The darkness of those times," he observes, "was such that men slew their own children, and offered them up to idols." The Irish anciently sacrificed their first-born children to their chief idol, Crom-Cruach^u. What has produced the great moral change which we now see? a change affecting not only England, but all Europe; for, when St. Paul set foot at Philippi, all Europe was given to idolatry. How is it that there is not now one heathen temple in it, in which worship is offered to an idol, though Athens alone had hundreds of altars dedicated to idolatry. So mighty a change has been effected by the reception of those truths of which the Bible is the depository. See Jer. xxiii. 29; Rom. i. 16; Dan. ii. 34.

Great, also, has been the support afforded by it under the extremity of human suffering: so great, indeed, as to enable men in the very agony of death to pray for their murderers^x. How many death-beds is it at this moment cheering with hopes of eternal happiness, which could be derived from no other source? See 2 Tim. i. 8—10; 1 Cor. xv. 55—57.

As, therefore, the providence of God is seen in the preservation of the Bible, so also his grace is seen in its effects, and those effects bear a strong testimony to its Divine origin. See Gal. v. 22; Eph. vi. 17.

^u A plain situated in the district at present called the county of Leitrim, to which they gave the name of Magh Sleach, or Field of Slaughter, was the chief scene of these horrors, which continued to be perpetrated till the introduction of Christianity by St. Patrick, in the fifth century. This is proved by an ancient MS. quoted by Moore, in his History of Ireland.

^x Acts vii. 60.

§ iii. *The Agreement of the several parts of the Bible with each other.*

But, besides the Preservation and Moral Effects of the Bible, another very remarkable circumstance may be mentioned, illustrating its Divine authority: namely,

The Agreement of the several parts with each other.

This peculiarity appears very striking, whether we regard the writers of the Bible, or what they have written.

1. *The writers of the Bible.*

(1.) The Bible was not written by one person, but by many, of different stations, abilities, and education.

Moses, who wrote the Pentateuch, was learned in all the wisdom of the Egyptians, and brought up as the son of Pharaoh's daughter; David and Solomon were kings; Daniel, a minister of state; Ezra, a priest and a scribe; Amos, a herdsman^y; Matthew was a tax-gatherer; Luke, a physician; Paul, a learned Pharisee; Peter and John, fishermen, "unlearned and ignorant men^z;" *i.e.* they filled no public station, and had not received a liberal education.

(2.) These persons lived at different times, and therefore could not have had any intercourse with each other.

David, the sweet psalmist of Israel, wrote about 400 years after Moses; Isaiah about 250 years after David; Matthew, more than 700 years after Isaiah, and 400 years after Malachi, the last of the writers of the Old Testament. Between Moses who wrote the first, and John who wrote the last of the sixty-six books which form our present Bible, there was an interval of more than 1500 years.

Now, in such a Book, or rather a collection of books, so written, is not the agreement of the several parts with each other remarkable?

2. *What they have written.*

(1.) This agreement is on subjects the most difficult.

These writings treat of the attributes and the purposes of God. They unfold to us what is his great design in the government of the world, from the beginning to the end of

^y Amos vii. 14.

^z Acts iv. 13.

time. In Genesis we see the Church commencing her pilgrimage: in the book of St. John's Revelation, we are called to contemplate her entering into glory. Gen. iii. 15; Dan. vii. 14; 1 John iii. 8; Rev. xi. 15; vii. 9, &c.

They reveal to us that the great intention of God's love is to "gather together in one all things in Christ^a," to the praise of the glory of his grace. See John xvii. 20. 24.

They treat of the nature of man^b, and of the object of his creation^c. They hold forth a mirror to the human heart, so that every one may see reflected his own motives and character. They teach us the nature of true happiness^d.

These subjects being of infinite importance to all, have engaged the deepest study of the most profound philosophers, whose views of them have been vague and various, whilst those of the writers of the Bible have been clear and consistent^e.

(2.) This agreement appears the more remarkable, when we consider the different forms under which they have treated these subjects.

One frames laws, as Moses; another gives an abstract of the history of the Jewish nation, as Joshua; another of a private family, as that of Ruth; another writes Psalms, as David; or Proverbs, as Solomon; Isaiah, Jeremiah, and others, give us prophecies; the four Evangelists, a biography; Paul and others, letters.

In comparing the Old and New Testaments, we perceive a striking contrast as to the forms of religion inculcated by Moses and by our blessed Lord.

The law, as given by Moses, abounded in ceremonies, and was adapted only to the peculiar circumstances of one nation^f. The system of religion which the writers of the New Testament have given, contains but few ceremonies (and those of a very simple character), and admits of universal application^g. How wonderful that two systems, at first sight so dissimilar, should be found, on a more

^a Eph. i. 20.

^b Gen. i. 26.

Rom. iii. 23; viii. 7.

^c Prov. xvi. 4.

1 Cor. x. 31.

^d Eccles. xii. 13.

Matt. v. 3, &c.; xi. 28.

^e See Mosheim's Eccl. Hist. vol. i., on the absurdities and opposition to each other of the Greek and Roman philosophers.

^f Deut. xvi. 16.

^g Mark xvi. 15.

careful study, to agree with each other in all material points! They present, throughout, the same views of the purposes of God, the only views worthy of Him which have ever been given; they present, throughout, the same views of the nature of man,—views which are different from all others, but which alone are found to agree with fact; and they present those very views of the nature of true happiness, which are proved by experience to be true. In short, the religious systems of the Old and New Testament, as unlike in some of their parts as the scaffolding and the building, are found, in those very parts, to have the same connexion as the scaffolding has with the building. See Gal. iii. 24, 25; Heb. vii. 18, 19.

Whence such agreement in all its parts? Surely a Divine architect must have superintended such a building! Surely the holy men who composed the Bible, “spake as they were moved by the Holy Ghost^h,” surely, “all Scripture is given by inspiration of Godⁱ!”

§ iv. *The Spirit of the Writers of the Bible.*

I. The Bible is distinguished as the Word of God by its perfect regard to TRUTH. It inculcates a regard to truth by the most awful sanctions, declaring not only that “all liars shall have their part in the lake which burneth with fire and brimstone^k,” but that the Lord will cut off all flattering lips^l: yet the vice denounced in this latter sentence is almost esteemed by the world as a virtue.

This regard to truth, which the writers of the Bible inculcate in others, they practised themselves.

(1.) Take a general illustration, which runs through almost the whole book—namely, *the character given of the Jewish people*. For instance, Moses says of them, at the close of his ministry: “Ye have been rebellious

^h 2 Pet. i. 21.

ⁱ 2 Tim. iii. 16. Inspiration has been accurately defined to be “such an immediate and complete *discovery* by the Holy Spirit, to the minds of the sacred writers, of those things which could not have otherwise been known—and such an effectual *superintendence* as to those matters which they might have been informed of by other means—as entirely preserved them from error in every particular which could in the least affect any of the doctrines or precepts contained in their books.”—*Scott's Essays*.

^k Rev. xxi. 8.

^l Psalm xii. 3.

against the Lord from the day that I knew you^m;" and again, "For I know that after my death ye will utterly corrupt yourselvesⁿ," &c. And every subsequent writer presents the same view: see Judges ii. 19; 1 Sam. xii. 12; Neh. ix.; Psalm lxxviii.; Isaiah i.

It is not to be supposed that the Jews were so much worse than any other nation. As to their knowledge of Divine truth, the general purity of their worship, and the instances among them of individual piety—as Joseph, Moses, Samuel, Daniel, and others—they were very far superior to every other people. But contrast their history, as given in the Bible, with that of every nation in the world: where is a nation so condemned by its own historians, so fearfully threatened with punishment? See Levit. xxvi., &c. See also the writings of Jeremiah and the other prophets.

What, then, is the cause of this difference? The answer is, that Moses and the prophets wrote under the guidance of the Holy Spirit. Thus were they taught to estimate character justly, as in the light of eternal Truth: and by the same guidance, being raised above every prejudice, they were enabled to state the truth faithfully.

(2.) The same uniform regard to truth distinguishes their writings when called to speak of themselves, or of those whose reputation would reflect credit on themselves.

The following remark is made by Davison in speaking of the prophecies which Moses gave concerning our Lord: "How unlike is it to the ordinary course of man's own spirit or wisdom, to dwell upon the downfall of his own works, just at the moment when they come fresh from his hands!" Yet Moses does this very thing: he foretels that all his laws would be broken^o, and he points to a prophet who was to be greater than himself, and who was to supersede his dispensation, but who was to be of a different family, and even of a different tribe. Gen. xlix. 10; Deut. xviii. 15. 18; Acts vii. 37; John i. 45.

He himself informs us, that he was born of a marriage, which by his own laws would have been considered incestuous. Exod. vi. 20.

Again he records, without any palliation,—

^m Deut. ix. 24.

ⁿ Deut. xxxi. 29.

^o Deut. xxxi. 29

The sins of the Hebrew Patriarchs—Abraham; Isaac; Jacob. Gen. xii. 11—13; xx.; xxvi. 7; xxvii.

The sins of his grandfather, Levi. Gen. xxxiv. 25; xlix. 5—7.

The sins of his brother, Aaron; and of his two eldest sons. Exod. xxxii.; Lev. x.

He relates also his own sin. From himself we learn that God was once so much displeased as to seek to kill him^p. Three times he mentions the sin which excluded him from Canaan^q; and he records his unsuccessful prayer for the reversal of the sentence. Deut. iii. 23—27.

In the same spirit the Evangelists notice their own faults, and the faults of those whose reputation would reflect credit on themselves. Two of them, Matthew and John, were Apostles; and as an illustration of their strict regard to truth, observe verses 10 and 26 of Matt. viii., where they are represented as showing less faith than a Gentile and a national enemy.—See Matt. xv. 16, “Are ye also yet without understanding?” and again, Matt. xvi. 7—11; xviii. 3; xx. 20, &c., which last passage records worldly ambition in two of the Apostles, and wounded pride in the other ten. See also Matt. xxvi. 31. 56; John x. 6; xvi. 32.

Mark and Luke were not Apostles, but their reputation was so intimately connected with that of the Apostles, that they would have every inducement to place their character in as favourable a light as possible; yet, in connexion with this, refer to Mark vi. 52; viii. 18; ix. 32. 34; x. 14; xiv. 32. 35—45. 50. And observe particularly Mark xvi. 14, where Christ is said to have upbraided them with their unbelief and hardness of heart. See also Luke viii. 24, 25; ix. 40—45; xviii. 34. The fact that they “understood none of these things,” implies that their prejudices had obscured from their view the great fundamental doctrine of the atonement. See also Luke xxii. 24; xxiv. 11.

What the Evangelists tell us of the low condition, the infirmities, the sufferings and death of the great Author and Finisher of their faith, is very observable; particularly that they represent Him to have been dejected, to have been exceeding sorrowful in an agony through fear of

^p Exod. iv. 24.

^q Numb. xx. 1—12; xxvii. 12—14; Deut. xxxii. 51.

death^r, and to have expressed Himself in those remarkable words, "My God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me?" Matt. xxvii. 46. See Heb. v. 7.

That they who in some parts of their narrative represent our Lord as the "Word made flesh," "the only begotten of the Father^s," exercising in so many instances the prerogatives of God, should in other parts introduce circumstances so humiliating and apparently inconsistent, proves, beyond all question, how sacred was their regard to truth.

So, again, the writers of the Epistles record without reserve the disorders^t of those very Churches which they themselves had planted, in whose reputation therefore their own was involved, and for whom they had the strongest affection^u.

For instance, they record, as Lardner remarks, the readiness of the Churches of Galatia to depart from the purity and simplicity of the Gospel; the scandalous disorders among the members of the Church of Corinth in some solemn parts of their worship; the contentions among them in behalf of their teachers; the preposterous use of the gift of tongues, proceeding from vanity and ostentation; and the unaccountable conceits of others, who depended upon an empty faith without works, and a speculative faith without a suitable holiness of conduct.

In some of his Epistles, St. Paul mentions his Apostolical authority having been questioned in these very Churches. In his Epistle to Timothy^v, he refers to his former guilt, when the subject by no means forces him to do so. He speaks of it in the strongest terms. See also Acts xxvi. 11, which was written by his companion and one of his most intimate friends.

Nor does Peter in his own writings attempt to qualify, by any apology, the sin, which it was well known he had committed, of denying his Lord.

Thus we find a confirmation of Lowth's remark, that "while we see other writers ambitious of showing their wit and eloquence, and telling their story in an eloquent plausible style, a simplicity quite peculiar to itself distin-

^r Luke xxii. 42—44.

^u 2 Cor. ii. 4; vi. 11—13; xi. 2.

^s John i. 14.

^v 1 Tim. i. 13.

^t 1 Cor. i. 11; v. 1; viii. 11; 2 Cor. xii. 20.

guishes the Bible, forcing on the mind the conviction that these men had no other object than, by a naked manifestation of truth, to commend themselves to every man's conscience in the sight of God."

II. The Bible is distinguished as the Word of God by the spirit of LOVE which breathes throughout it.

(1.) *The writers display the strongest love to their fellow-creatures.* For instance, MOSES, while recording the crimes and consequent misery of the Jewish people^w, yet manifests such intense love to them as to be constantly interceding most earnestly in their behalf^x. On one occasion he for forty days and forty nights continued in intercession for this ungrateful people, praying even that he might be blotted out of the book of life, rather than that they should be destroyed^y; though such a destruction would have been the just punishment of their sins, and would have made his family to grow into a great nation^z, instead of becoming, as it did, altogether undistinguished. See Numb. xxvii. 15—23.

ST. PAUL, who wrote fourteen of the twenty-one Epistles, displays exactly the same spirit. After he had been for twenty-five years most bitterly persecuted by his countrymen, and while they were continuing these persecutions, this is the spirit of love in which he writes: "I say the truth in Christ, I lie not, my conscience also bearing me witness in the Holy Ghost, that I have great heaviness and continual sorrow in my heart; for I could wish that myself were accursed from Christ, for my brethren, my kinsmen according to the flesh^a." And wherever he went, his conduct testified the sincerity of his declaration. Compare Acts xiii. 45; xiv. 19, and xvii. 5, with xiv. 1, and xvii. 1, 2, 10, from which it appears, that after the severest ill-treatment from the Jews, he took the earliest opportunity of overcoming evil with good, by again entering the synagogues to instruct them.

Is there not something supernatural in this, especially when it is considered what was once the spirit of this man? See Acts ix. 1; xxvi. 11; 1 Tim. i. 13. Who had wrought this great change?

^w Deut. xxxii. &c.

^x Numb. xiv. 11—19.

^y Exod. xxxii. 32.

^z Exod. xxxii. 10.

^a Rom. ix. 1—3.

(2.) *They give an exalted view of the love of God.* In what other book can be found such a display of it as shines forth in the single parable of the Prodigal Son^b, or in the first Epistle of John?

What a view of the love of God is given in the history of the Lord Jesus Christ! God manifest in the flesh! weeping over apostate Jerusalem, praying for his murderers^c, dying for his enemies^d, yea, and delighting so to do^e, that He might obtain for them eternal happiness.

(3.) *Love is made by them the sum of man's duty.* See Deut. vi. 5; Matt. xxii. 37—40; Rom. xiii. 10, where love to God is represented as the supreme affection, from which, as its source, love to man is to proceed.

In order that we may form some idea of the extent to which love towards our fellow-creatures is required, we must remember that the Bible commands us to “overcome evil with good^f,” “to bless them that curse us^g,” and “to love one another as Christ has loved us^h.” St. John says, “We ought to lay down our lives for the brethrenⁱ.”

III. HOLINESS distinguishes the Bible as the Word of God.

(1.) Whether it be laws, history, narratives of private life, prophecy, proverbs, letters, or controversy, we are brought, and in a way which no other book brings us, as into the immediate presence of a Being of infinite holiness^j, before whom the most exalted human characters appear as miserable sinners. This appears in the cases of Job (xl. 4); Isaiah (vi. 5); Daniel (ix. 4, &c.); and St. Paul (1 Tim. i. 15).

(2.) While presenting to us God as clothed with every attribute that can exalt Him in our conceptions, the Scriptures enjoin, as the standard of duty, an imitation of those perfections. See Lev. xix. 2; Matt. v. 48; 2 Pet. i. 4, &c.

(3.) So directly do they condemn every evil disposition of the heart, that they rank unthankfulness to God^k,

^b Luke xv. 11. 20. 22.

^c Luke xix. 41; xxiii. 34.

^d Rom. v. 8.

^e Psalm xl. 6. 8.

Luke ix. 51.

Heb. xii. 2.

^f Rom. xii. 21.

^g Matt. v. 44.

^h John xv. 12.

ⁱ 1 John iii. 16.

^j Hab. i. 13.

^k 2 Tim. iii. 2.

Rom. i. 21.

and forgetfulness of Him^l, among the most heinous crimes. They declare that he who "hateth his brother is a murderer^m;" that a proud lookⁿ, and pride in the heart^o, are an abomination to the Lord; that covetousness is idolatry^p; and that a worldly spirit shows a heart utterly destitute of love to God^q.

On the great day of Judgment, shadowed forth in temporal judgments by the writers of the Old Testament, and constantly and clearly alluded to in the New Testament, it is declared that God will bring "every secret thing into judgment^r," that "for every idle word men shall give account^s," and that so holy is heaven, that "there shall in no wise enter into it any thing that defileth," but they only "which are written in the Lamb's book of life." Rev. xxi. 27.

The holiness required by the Word of God has been one of the chief causes of its rejection. For it condemns those sinful lusts and practices which the natural man is most unwilling to relinquish. And the eye being evil, the whole body is full of darkness. See 2 Thess. ii. 11, 12, and John vii. 17; viii. 47.

IV. The Bible is distinguished by a SUPREME REGARD TO GOD'S GLORY.

This is a very remarkable feature of the Bible—that throughout, *God alone is exalted*.

(1.) Do the writers speak of any transaction in which they themselves were concerned? there appears the utmost anxiety on their part to lead the reader to reflect on God as the sole author of all the good that is done.

Thus Moses never claims the credit of any of the wonders done by him. God is his great subject. (See Exod. xviii. 8; Deut. i. 31; ii. 33; iii. 3; iv. 32—38; xxxiii. 26—29.) Once indeed he was betrayed into a forgetfulness of this great principle; but his record of his own guilt affords only a brighter display of his humility, and of his zeal for God's glory.

^l Psalm ix. 17.

^m 1 John iii. 15.

ⁿ Prov. vi. 17.

^o Prov. xvi. 5.

^p Col. iii. 5.

^q Luke xiv. 16—27.

Rom. viii. 6, 7.

1 John ii. 15.

^r Eccles. xii. 14.

^s Matt. xii. 36.

Observe how the same principle was carried out by Joshua (xxiii. 3); David (1 Chron. xxix. 11. 14); Daniel (ii. 20. 23. 30); Ezra (vii. 28); Nehemiah (ii. 12); Peter and John (Acts iii. 12—16); and Paul (Acts xxi. 19; 1 Cor. iii. 5; 2 Cor. iv. 7, and iii. 5).

(2.) Do they speak of the operations of nature? it is by referring, not to what are called the laws of nature, but to the great Author of those laws. Thus, "he sendeth the springs into the valleys which run among the hills^t." So with regard to the rain, He restrains^v, He increases^w, He prescribes the proportion^x, and appoints the place where it shall fall^y. "The Lord sitteth upon the flood^y." "The Lord hath his way in the whirlwind and in the storm^z." "He maketh the clouds his chariot, and walketh on the wings of the wind^a." Not a sparrow falls to the ground without Him^b.

(3.) Do they speak of the revolutions of empires? God alone is exalted.

As clay in the hand of the potter, so are all the kingdoms of the earth in God's hands. At what instant He shall speak concerning a nation, and concerning a kingdom, to pluck up and pull down and destroy it, or to build and plant it, so is it according to his will^c: Nebuchadnezzar^d, and Cyrus^e, the one in destroying, the other in restoring Jerusalem and her temple, are only spoken of as performing God's pleasure.

(4.) The great historical subject of the Old Testament is the Jewish people; and in their history how remarkably is God alone exalted!

The instruments used for their deliverance from Egypt and possession of Canaan seem purposely selected with this object. The stretching out of the rod of Moses brought up the plagues^f, and divided the Red sea^g: the uplifting of his arm, in prayer, caused the Amalekites to be defeated^h.

^t Psalm civ. 10, &c.

^u 2 Chron. vii. 13.

^v Jer. v. 24.

^w Joel ii. 23, 24.

^x Ezek. xxxiv. 26.

Amos iv. 7, 8.

^y Psalm xxix. 10.

^z Nahum i. 3.

^a Psalm civ. 3.

^b Matt. x. 29.

^c Jer. xviii. 7—10.

Dan. iv. 35.

^d Jer. xxv. 9.

^e Isaiah xlv. 28; xlv. 5.

^f Exod. vii.—x.

^g Exod. xiv.

^h Exod. xvii. 11.

At the approach of the ark borne by priests, the waters of Jordan were dividedⁱ; at the blowing of the rams' horns, the walls of Jericho fell down^j. Thus God made his own strength more conspicuous in the weakness of his instruments. Observe also the manner in which the deliverances were effected under the Judges and Kings. "He that had vaunted of his iron chariots," says Bishop Hall, "is slain by one nail of iron^k." "The Lord sold Sisera into the hand of a woman^l. Shamgar slew six hundred men with an ox-goad^m. Gideon routed a whole army with only three hundred companions, and by the simple stratagem of the empty pitchersⁿ. Samson's hair was the seat of his power^o," "the glory of God's omnipotency," as Bishop Hall remarks, "being manifested by the improbability of the means which He employed." David's sling and stone destroyed Goliath^p. In answer to prayer, Asa was enabled to overcome the mighty host of Zerah^q: and Jehoshaphat without striking a blow vanquished the Ammonites, &c.^r Throughout it is made to appear that the prosperity of the Jews depended, not on their forming a military spirit (they were forbidden the use of cavalry^s), or acquiring commercial wealth^t, or strengthening themselves by powerful alliances (which indeed were forbidden them^u), but simply on their trust in God. When they forsook Him, fenced cities availed them nothing, as in the case of Rehoboam (comp. 2 Chron. xi. 6—12, with xii. 4, 5). When they trusted in Him, one man could chase a hundred, as in the case of Jonathan (1 Sam. xiv. 13—16). Contrast also the utter failure of Sennacherib's immense army against Hezekiah^v, with the success of the Syrians against Joash, king of Judah^w.

(5.) Throughout the Bible, faith is the great principle that accomplishes every thing^x. And why? That all

ⁱ Josh. iii. 15; iv. 10.

^j Josh. vi. 20.

^k Judges iv. 3. 21.

^l Judges iv. 9; v. 26.

^m Judges iii. 31.

ⁿ Judges vii. 16—25.

^o Judges xvi. 17—20.

^p 1 Sam. xvii. 45. 49.

^q 2 Chron. xiv. 9—15.

^r 2 Chron. xx. 20—30.

^s Deut. xvii. 16.

Psalm xx. 7.

^t Levit. xxv.

^u Isaiah xxx. 2, 3.

Hosea xiv. 3.

^v 2 Kings xviii. 17; xix. 35.

^w 2 Chron. xxiv. 24.

^x Heb. xi.

boasting may be excluded^y: "that he who glorieth may glory in the Lord^z."

(6.) If the writers of the Bible speak of sin, they represent the great evil of it to be, that it dishonours God.

This brought destruction upon the Amalekites^a, upon Sennacherib^b, and Belshazzar. "The God in whose hand their breath was, and whose were all their ways, had they not glorified^c." Hence was the Gentile world given over to a reprobate mind, because, when they knew God, they glorified Him not as God^d. Hence God's controversy with the Jews^e: and even Moses, the most eminent of prophets^f, because he had neglected in one instance to sanctify God in the eyes of the children of Israel^g, was denied his fondest earthly desire^h.

Eli's punishment for neglecting to restrain his sonsⁱ, Hezekiah's for displaying his treasures^j, and David's punishment for his sin with Bathsheba^k, illustrate the same great truth, that the evil of sin consists in its dishonouring God. Hence the death of Nadab and Abihu^l, of Uzzah^m, and of Herodⁿ; and hence the solemn sanction of the Third Commandment.

The same principle of disregard to God's honour on the part of his servants is represented by the writers of the Bible as having been the cause of their calamities, as having raised up adversaries against Solomon^o, and as having led to the division of Israel and Judah. To this cause is attributed the captivity of the Ten Tribes, and afterwards of Judah and Benjamin^p, as well as their terrible destruction by the Romans^q. "Therefore God hid his face from them, because they were children in whom

y Rom. iii. 27.

Eph. ii. 8, 9.

z 1 Cor. i. 29. 31.

a Exod. xvii. 16.

b 2 Kings xix. 22—37.

c Dan. v. 23.

d Rom. i. 21. 28.

e Heb. iii. 19.

f Deut. xxxiv. 10.

g Numb. xx. 12.

h Deut. iii. 23—27.

i 1 Sam. ii. 29, 30.

j 2 Chron. xxxii. 25. 31.

k 2 Sam. xii. 9.

Psalm li. 4.

l Lev. x. 1—3.

m 2 Sam. vi. 7.

n Acts xii. 23.

o 1 Kings xi. 9—14.

p 2 Kings xvii. 14—20.

2 Chron. xxxvi. 16, 17.

q Luke xix. 42—44.

was no faith^r." "Because of unbelief they were broken off^s."

(7.) It is declared that the glory of God ought to be the great motive and end of all human actions^t; "whether, therefore, ye eat or drink, or whatsoever ye do, do all to the glory of God^u." Our Lord prays, "Father, glorify thy name^v." In the prayer which He has taught us, this is its chief subject: it begins and ends with it. In fact, the great object of the creation of the world, and of the incarnation of Christ, is declared to be the glory of God, and the display of the Divine perfections. See Rev. iv. 11.

Does not the fact, that this book breathes throughout such a spirit of truth, love, holiness, and supreme regard to God's glory, as plainly to show that "of God, and through God, and to God, are all things^w," tend strongly to confirm our conviction that it is what it claims to be, the Word of God?

§ v. *The Prophecies of the Bible proving it to be the Word of God.*

The most direct proof, however, of the Divine authority of the Bible may be drawn from the prophecies which it contains.

"The evidence of prophecy," Bishop Horsley remarks, "lies in these two particulars: that events have been predicted which are not within human foresight; and that the accomplishment of predictions has been brought about which must surpass human power and contrivance: the prediction, therefore, was not from man's sagacity, nor the event from man's will and design. And then, the goodness of the design, and the intricacy of the contrivance, complete the proof that the whole is of God."

It is easy to illustrate this by an example.

Prophecies respecting Nineveh, Babylon, Tyre, and Egypt.

Suppose, for instance, any one should now declare of some well-known city—say, London—that it would be

^r Deut. xxxii. 20.

Acts iii. 23.

^s Rom. xi. 20.

^t 1 Pet. iv. 11.

^u 1 Cor. x. 31.

^v John xii. 28.

^w Rom. xi. 36.

taken by a foreign invader. If this came to pass, what would be the impression on the minds of those who saw the event, and compared it with the account thus previously given?

It might be objected that this does not necessarily imply more than human foresight. Perhaps some signs of its approaching captivity might be discerned in the distant horizon: a cloud no bigger than a man's hand, yet sufficiently indicating the probability of a coming storm.

Perhaps it was only a bold assertion accidentally fulfilled, made and fulfilled because founded on general experience. Sooner or later, we know it to be according to general experience, that cities and nations should rise and fall, flourish and decay: and why not this city, as well as any other in the world?

But suppose this account had descended to particulars, stating how this city was to be delivered up:

1. That an *overrunning flood* would be the means of its captivity;

2. That at the time *its inhabitants would be in a state of drunkenness*;

3. That *its palace* (which it is ever the great object of the conqueror to spare) should be not only taken, but *dissolved*, or molten;

4. And that not merely captivity, but *desolation*, should be its portion for ever.

Suppose, moreover, that the book which contained this prediction, had also declared the fate of another neighbouring city; descending also to particulars, stating,

1. *The particular nations* (nations at the time scarcely in existence) which should take this city;

2. *The name* (one hundred years before he was born) of the person who was to head the invading armies;

3. The very *time* when it should be taken;

4. The *manner*—that it should be taken by surprise, during a time of feasting; not, like the former city, by an overrunning flood, but by the *drying up* of the river;

5. That it should be *utterly destroyed*.

Suppose, lastly, that these predictions had been uttered at a time when this city was mistress of the world, and in the height of her glory; and yet that all the predictions, respecting both these cities, had been literally fulfilled.

Is not such a combination of circumstances beyond human foresight?

But, again, suppose this same book declared, of some other mighty city, that it should fall from its greatness; but that, unlike either of the first two cities, it should not be doomed to utter destruction, but *merely sink into insignificance*; so that, while its place might be easily pointed out, it yet should be inhabited by only a few fishermen.

Suppose, also, that the same book, speaking of some mighty empire, had foretold, *not* that it should be destroyed, but that it should be degraded from age to age, that it should be looked upon as the basest of the kingdoms, should never exalt itself any more above the nations, nor even have a prince of its own to govern it. If all these particular prophecies should be fulfilled, could we doubt from whom alone such precise and wonderful foreknowledge must proceed? Should we not at once be convinced that the book containing these predictions, and appealing to historical facts quite independent of itself for their fulfilment, was indeed the *Book of God*?

Such is the Bible: such the nature of the prophecies by which it proves its claim to be the word of God.

When NINEVEH, ancient as Asshur, the son of Shem^x, was an exceeding great city^y declared by Diodorus Siculus, a heathen historian, to be sixty miles round, encompassed with walls one hundred feet high, and so broad that three chariots might drive abreast on them, having 1500 towers of 200 feet in height placed at intervals on these walls, thinking within herself, "I am, and there is none beside me^z," even during that period did Nahum, and, one hundred years after him, Zephaniah, foretel the overthrow of this mighty city; and Diodorus Siculus, utterly ignorant of the prediction, wrote an historical account of the destruction, confirming all that the prophets had said. See Nahum i. 8. 10; and Zeph. ii. 13. 15.

Of BABYLON, older perhaps than Nineveh^a, "the glory of kingdoms^b," "the golden city^c," "abundant in treasures^d," "the praise of the whole earth^e," the great metro-

^x Gen. x. 11.

^y Jonah iii. 3.

^z Zeph. ii. 15.

^a Gen. x. 10.

^b Isaiah xiii. 19.

^c Isaiah xiv. 4.

^d Jer. li. 13.

^e Jer. li. 41.

polis of the world after the destruction of Nineveh—of Babylon, which, according to Herodotus, had one hundred gates of solid brass, and walls thirty-five feet high, and so thick that six chariots could go abreast on the top of them—the Prophets foretold the destruction, specifying the various particulars already referred to; namely:—

1. The particular *nations* which should take it. Isa. xxi. 2. Jer. li. 11.

2. The *commander's name*. Isa. xlv. 28; xlv. 1.

3. The *time*. Jer. xxv. 11, 12.

4. The *manner*;—that it should be taken by surprise, and by the drying up of the river. Isa. xlv. 27. Jer. l. 24. 38; li. 30. 36.

5. Its *utter destruction*. Isa. xiii. 19; xiv. 22, 23. Jer. l. 13. 23. 39, 40.

Consider the improbability of the fulfilment of these prophecies at the time they were delivered. Isaiah prophesied one hundred years before Jeremiah, and when the Persians were scarcely known as a nation; Jeremiah prophesied less than sixty years before Babylon was taken, and at the time when Nebuchadnezzar, its king, and a mighty conqueror, had very greatly enlarged it^f. The historical account confirming these predictions is given by the heathen historians Herodotus and Xenophon; the former of whom lived about 250, the latter about 350, years after Isaiah.

The complete fulfilment of these prophecies was gradually accomplished through a period of several hundred years. After Babylon's first humiliation by the destruction of her idol temple, and her capture by Cyrus, efforts were made from time to time to restore her to her former grandeur. "Alexander," says Rollin, "the most powerful prince that ever reigned, the most obstinate with regard to carrying on his projects, a prince, none of whose enterprises had ever miscarried, attempted it, but he failed; failed in this enterprise alone, though it did not seem so difficult as the rest." "But," as the same historian further remarks, "heaven and earth would sooner have passed away than Alexander's design have been executed." It had been otherwise declared in prophecy: "I will sweep it with the besom of destruction^g." We are witnesses to

^f Dan. iv. 30.

^g Isaiah xiv. 23.

the truth of these prophecies. Such is the present state of both Nineveh and Babylon, that their exact situation cannot be ascertained. "Their very ruins," says Newton, "have been ruined." Lucian, the heathen writer, who lived in the second century, has these remarkable words: "Babylon will soon be sought for and not found, as is already the case with Nineveh."

TYRE is now as it is described by Ezekiel^b; though, at the time he wrote, it was in the greatest commercial grandeurⁱ. Tyre, which as early as the days of Joshua is mentioned as a strong city^j, whose antiquity is described by Isaiah as "of ancient days," "the crowning city," "whose merchants," he says, "are princes, whose traffickers are the honourable of the earth^k," is now a hovel for fishermen. Her pride sealed her doom, and called forth the voice of prophecy to proclaim it. Isa. xxiii. 9. Ezek. xxvii. 32; xxviii. 1—20.

EGYPT, once the greatest and most fertile, is now "the basest of kingdoms," according to Ezekiel's prophecy^l: it has not had, for the last 2000 years, a native Egyptian prince to govern it^m. It has been successively conquered and oppressed by the Babylonians, the Persians, the Macedonians, the Romans, the Saracens, and the Mamelukes.

The preservation of the Jews, as a separate people.

But there is a still more wonderful case before our own eyes; that is, the present state of the Jews, as showing the fulfilment of the prophecies, which Moses and other sacred writers had given concerning them. Not to mention the various details of their history which had been distinctly foretold, their *preservation as a separate people* is in itself a lasting miracle. That a nation should exist, as the Jews have done, for 3300 years, able to trace their origin from one individual, and without mingling with any other nation, is altogether opposed to experience. Our own nation is made up of Britons, Romans, Saxons, Normans, &c.; but, though not one thousand years have passed away since these various parts were united, yet they are now so blended together, that they can scarcely be dis-

^b Ezek. xxvi. 4, 5.

ⁱ Ezek. xxvii. Isaiah xxiii. 3. 8.

^j Josh. xix. 29.

^k Isaiah xxiii. 7, 8.

^l Ezek. xxix. 14, 15.

^m Ezek. xxx. 13.

tinguished. The same remark might be applied to other nations: the exception, and perhaps the only exception, is to be found in the case of the Jewish nation. And yet here there seems to have been the least reason to expect it; for consider,

1. *The ancestor of the Jews.* Abraham was not a law-giver, a philosopher, or a conqueror. He built no cityⁿ. When he died, he had not a foot of land but the cave in which he was to be buried^o. It was from his son Isaac alone, as the child of promise^p, that the Jews were descended; and nearly two hundred years after the birth of that son, they had increased only to about seventy souls. Gen. xxi. 12; xlv. 27.

2. *The state of the Jews, when the prophecies of their preservation as a separate people were delivered.* Balaam's prophecy, uttered by one who wished their destruction, and Moses' remarkable prophecy on the subject^q, were written when the Jews were wanderers in the wilderness, which Moses himself foretold was to be the premature grave of all the men among them who entered it, with the exception of Caleb and Joshua^r. They were surrounded by nations greater and mightier than themselves, who combined to attempt their destruction, but whom they were commanded to extirpate. Jeremiah's prediction of their deliverance^s, was given when their utter destruction was threatened by their captivity in Babylon, and when ten of their twelve tribes had already disappeared.

3. *Their peculiar affliction as a nation.* "Wars, battles, sieges, fires, famines, pestilences, rebellions, massacres, persecutions, captivity, slavery, misery, mark their whole history^t." At the last destruction of their city by Titus, 1,100,000 perished, and 97,000 were taken prisoners. In the rebellion that followed, 580,000 were destroyed in public combat, besides an innumerable number of persons who, in other places, killed themselves or perished through famine, banishment, or other miseries. Fifty fortified castles and 985 flourishing and populous towns were plundered and burnt: and so general was the massacre of the

ⁿ Heb. xi. 9.

^o Acts vii. 5.

^p Gen. xvii. 19; xxi. 12.

^q Numb. xxiii. 9. Deut. iv. 31.
Levit. xxvi. 44.

^r Numb. xiv. 23—35.

^s Jer. xxx. 10, 11; xxxiii. 25;
xlv. 27, 28.

^t Bishop Newton.

inhabitants, that all Judea was in some measure left desolate, and converted into a desert. See Hales' Analysis.

4. *Their present state of suffering and dispersion.* Ever since that event, *i.e.* for more than 1700 years, their land has been "trodden down of the Gentiles"; they themselves have been driven from their country, scattered over the face of the whole earth without distinction of tribes, without a king, without a prince^v, without even the form of a civil government, without a temple, with no officiating priesthood^w, without the means of sacrifice; for where can it be offered^x? Yet they still exist; unbelievers in Christianity, and yet the guardians of those very prophecies which prove the unreasonableness of their unbelief; mingled among, but distinct from, those around them; the wonder and scorn of the world; "as a bush on fire, and not consumed."

And 2000, 3000 years ago, was this pointed out by different writers of the Bible, each confirming or throwing some additional light on what others had declared. See Isa. x. 21. Ezek. vi. 8; xi. 16. Amos ix. 9. Luke xxi. 22. 24. Rom. xi. 25—32. Can we then doubt that such writers spake as they were moved by the Holy Ghost?

The Extirpation of the Edomites.

This view of the preservation of the Jews is placed in a stronger light, by contrasting it with the prophecies respecting the extirpation of the Edomites.

The Edomites, like the Jews, were the descendants of Isaac. They were the posterity of Esau, as the Jews were of his twin-brother Jacob; and what was there to guide the conjectures of men in thus discriminating their future history?

Humanly speaking, the Edomites were more likely to be preserved than the Jews. They rose earlier into power; and they were more warlike. The Jews were scattered by frequent captivities; not so the Edomites. When Jerusalem was taken by the Romans, the Edomites remained powerful and flourishing.

^u Luke xxi. 24.

^v Hosea iii. 4.

^w The family of Aaron are known, and bear the name of Cohen (*i.e.* priest), subjoined either to their proper or family name, but the Jews have no officiating priesthood.—R. H. Herschell's Sketch of the Jews.

^x Deut. xii. 14. 2 Chron. vii. 12.

Traces of many towns and villages are yet to be seen in Edom, showing it once to have been thickly inhabited^y. Within three days' journey of the Dead Sea, there are upwards of thirty ruined towns; and in the neighbourhood of Mount Seir there are the ruins of a city which display great former magnificence.

But while they boasted in their power, and gloried over their brethren, the descendants of Jacob, the following prophecies were uttered: "Thy terribleness hath deceived thee, and the pride of thine heart, O thou that dwellest in the clefts of the rock, that holdest the height of the hill: though thou shouldest make thy nest as high as the eagle, I will bring thee down from thence, saith the Lord: also Edom shall be a desolation^z:" "there shall not be any remaining of the house of Esau^a:" and (in the emphatic language of prophecy) "Esau is not." Jer. xlix. 10.

The Edomites, though they existed as a nation for more than 1700 years, and many hundred years after the prophecies of their destruction were uttered, have nevertheless been cut off; while, as prophecy also foretold, the Jews are in every land.

And in the same book which thus marked the opposite fate of the descendants of the twin-brothers, Jacob and Esau, is also defined the character of those who should be found in Edom, after the Edomites had been rooted out.

1. Mal. i. 4. "They shall call them the border of wickedness:" and such is the fact. Edom is not inhabited; but the Arabs who migrate through it are notorious for robbery and murder, and are described by recent travellers as a most savage and treacherous race.

2. Obad. 8. "Shall I not in that day, saith the Lord, even destroy the wise men out of Edom, and understanding out of the mount of Esau?" The Edomites were distinguished for wisdom. Job was an Edomite, and his book, the earliest probably in existence, illustrates both the wealth and the wisdom of Edom. Sir Isaac Newton traces the origin of letters, astronomy, and navigation to them; and it is probable that the Egyptians learned from them the chronology of ancient kingdoms. But the wanderers now among the ruined cities of Edom are so sunk

^y See Burckhardt's and Volney's Travels, as quoted by Keith.

^z Jer. xlix. 16.

^a Obad. 18.

in folly, as to consider these remains of antiquity to be the work of genii. To clear away a little rubbish merely to allow the water to flow into an ancient cistern, is described as an undertaking far beyond their views.

But perhaps the most striking of the prophecies concerning Edom is, that "none shall pass through it for ever and ever^b." How but by inspiration from God could it be known that this difficulty of access should apply to Edom? For at the time it was declared, Edom was a commercial nation, possessing marts much frequented, forming, as Keith has remarked, the most direct and commodious channel of communication between Jerusalem and her dependencies on the Red Sea, as well as between Syria and India. Some hundreds of years after the prophecy, a Roman road passed directly through the country, and at this time it would form a shorter route than the ordinary one to India.

Nevertheless, that which the sacred writers declared two thousand years ago is fulfilled.

"Even the Arabs of the neighbouring regions," as Keith further remarks, "whose home is the desert, and whose occupation is wandering, are afraid to enter it, or to conduct any within its borders."

Modern travellers have attempted it under every advantage, but failed; finding difficulties which no other country presents to a passage through it.

The following point should also be observed. The same prophets, whose predictions of desolation to Judea and Idumæa have been so signally fulfilled, have also foretold with regard to Judea, that she shall be restored to fertility^c, but with regard to Idumæa, that its desolation shall be perpetual. In the present day, Judea, though lying waste and trodden under the foot of the Gentile, still possesses the capability of being fertile; but the whole interior of Idumæa is becoming one vast expanse of shifting sand, drifted from the borders of the Red Sea, which will make it as incapable of fertility as Sodom and Gomorrah, to which it is compared by Jeremiah (xlix. 18^d).

^b Isaiah xxxiv. 10.

^c Joel iii. 18.

^d For the prophecies referring to Edom or Idumæa, see Isaiah xxxiv. 5. 10—17. Also Jer. xlix. 7—22. Ezek. xxv. 13, &c; xxxv. 1, &c. Joel iii. 19. Obad. ver. 1, 2, 8, 9, 17, 18. Mal. i. 3, 4.

Do not these facts irresistibly prove to us, that He who governs the world inspired the Scriptures?

The Extent of Prophecy.

But the prophecies respecting Nineveh, Babylon, Tyre, Egypt, and the preservation of the Jews, and the extirpation of the Edomites, form but a very small part of the prophecies contained in this wonderful Book. "In the heart of the captivity, in the abyss of the Babylonian bondage, Daniel weighed and numbered the kingdoms of the earth." (See Davison on Prophecy.)

The prophecies of the Bible form a sketch, by anticipation, of the history of the world; not of its politics, as such; but of its history as connected with the progress of religion. (See Butler's Analogy, Part II. chap. vii.)

The prophet Moses foretold the rise of the Roman empire 800 years before its existence^e; and the circumstances under which he mentioned it are very remarkable. The Jews were surrounded by many nations, whose languages they understood, who were often attempting their destruction, and of whom it was foretold that they should be the instruments for their correction: but for their final dispersion and punishment, it was predicted that a nation should come from afar, whose language they did not understand. And the prediction was literally fulfilled in the overthrow of the Jews by the Romans. Human foresight could not have thus looked into the distant future. Moses was under no temptation to hazard a conjecture, the fulfilment^f of which would require such an improbable combination of circumstances; for it was most offensive to those to whom it was addressed, and was therefore, upon merely human principles, calculated to destroy the authority of him who published it.

The prophet foretold the overthrow of the Persian empire by Alexander^g, at the moment it was rising into fame: speaking of him as the first king of Græcia^g; particularly

^e Deut. xxviii. 49, 50.

^g Dan. viii. 21.

^f Dan. xi. 2. 4.

noticing the rapidity of his conquests, and comparing him to the panther or leopard, which is remarkable for the impetuosity with which it seizes its prey^h: and we know that in the short space of twelve years, Alexander extended his conquests to the very banks of the Ganges. They foretold the fourfold division of his empire, and particularly the wars and internal commotions of Egypt and Syria, from his death to the time of Antiochus Epiphanes.

The prophets foretold the ravages of the Saracens coming from the south, and of the Turks from the northⁱ, entering into the most remarkable details respecting the nature and extent of their conquests, specifying what countries should escape, and what should fall under their power. (See Newton on the Prophecies.)

Besides the cities and countries already mentioned, the prophets accurately described also the subsequent history of Ammon^j, Moab^k, Philistia^l, and Lebanon^m.

But we may notice further illustrations of these ancient prophecies in the present state of the Africans, and the Arabians, of Europe, of Asia, and we may say of America also. Take for instance the fulfilment of Noah's prophecy.

When the earth was repeopled by the descendants of the three sons of Noah, Asia was principally peopled by the descendants of Shem; Africa, by those of Ham; Europe and the northern part of Asia, by those of Japheth. We see now, as foretold more than 3000 years ago by Noah, Japheth "enlarged," "dwelling also in the tents of Shemⁿ." At this moment not a single spot in Europe or America is in the possession of any of the nations whom the Scriptures represent as the descendants of Shem; while the extent of the British dominions alone, over parts of Asia, includes nearly one hundred millions of people. We now see slavery yet lingering over the descendants of Ham; in North and South America, and in those of the West India

^h Dan. vii. 6.

ⁱ Dan. xi. 40, 41.

^j Ezek. xxv. 2. 5. 7. 10; xxi. 32.

Jer. xlix. 2.

Zeph. ii. 9.

^k Jer. xlviii.

^l Ezek. xxv.

Jer. xlvii. 5.

Amos i.

Zeph. ii.

Zech. ix.

^m Isaiah x. 19; xxxiii. 9.

ⁿ Gen. ix. 27.

Islands which are not subject to Great Britain, they are still the servants of servants°.

So also in the case of Ishmael and his descendants the Arabians. It was foretold, three thousand years ago, that the family of Ishmael should dwell in the presence of their enemies; their hand being against every man, and every man's hand against them^p. At the present day the Arabians descended from Ishmael are the only nations in the world who remain unconquered, although Sesostris, Cyrus, Pompey, Trajan, and the Turks, in the height of their power, attempted to conquer them: for 300 years they exercised dominion over the most civilized and fertile portions of the earth, and yet (in striking contrast with what has happened to those who have conquered Rome and other polished nations) their own habits have not been altered; in the midst of the civilized world, they have continued uncivilized. The children of the bondwoman are free; the children of promise, descended from the same ancestor, are conquered and outcast. How opposed is this to what, humanly speaking, was probable, when the prophets wrote these predictions! Whence was such knowledge of the future but from God? How can the book that contains them be any thing less than the Book of God?

From the beginning of the world, prophecy, as it is found in the Bible, has been in a continued course of fulfilment; accumulating its evidences as time advances; affording to those who (like ourselves) have not seen the miracles of Moses, Elijah, Elisha, of our blessed Lord, or of his Apostles, a standing miracle, a light like the sun, "that shineth more and more unto the perfect day." Prov. iv. 18.

The peculiar value of Prophecy as an evidence that the Bible is the Word of God.

But, strong as is the evidence to be derived from the prophecies of the Bible considered *separately* (as showing a foreknowledge which could come only from God), their chief value is in this, that they are all parts of one system.

° Gen. ix. 25—27.

^p Gen. xvi. 10—12; xvii. 20.

Nineveh, Babylon, Tyre, Egypt, the Edomites, the Persians, the Greeks, the Romans, the Jews, &c., became the subjects of prophecy, because, and only so far as, their history touched upon the subject of the kingdom of Christ. In the history of his kingdom on earth, the Bible presents two great epochs,—his first and his second coming; and under these two great epochs all prophecy may be arranged.

1. From the prophecies which speak of the first epoch we may gather a complete outline of all the chief points of his history as recorded in the Gospels. They foretel his Divine and human nature^q; his descent from the first woman^r; from Abraham^s; from Isaac, not Ishmael; from Jacob, not Esau; from Judah, the fourth son, not Reuben, the first-born^t; from Jesse^u; from David, the youngest of eight^v. They mention the time of his coming^w; the place of his birth^x; and the circumstances attending it, viz. that He should be born of a virgin^y, and that a messenger should go before Him^z. They specify moreover his offices, as Prophet, Priest, and King^a; the place where his ministry should commence^b; the confirmation it should receive from miracles^c; his sufferings and death^d; his resurrection^e; his ascension^f; and his sending the Holy Spirit^g.

2. The prophecies concerning the second epoch describe the various fortunes of his Church from his ascension till his second coming, embracing many predictions yet to be fulfilled, but the general bearing of which is to encourage the most exalted hopes as to the glory awaiting that Church. They comprehend therefore the time when the Jews shall be converted^h, and the “kingdoms of this

^q Isaiah ix. 6.

^r Gen. iii. 15.

^s Gen. xii. 3.

^t Gen. xlix. 10.

^u Isaiah xi. 1.

^v 1 Sam. xvi. 11.

Jer. xxiii. 5.

^w Gen. xlix. 10.

Dan. ix. 24.

Haggai ii. 6—9.

^x Micah v. 2.

^y Isaiah vii. 14.

^z Mal. iii. 1.

^a Psalm cx.

Zech. vi. 13.

Isaiah lxi. 1.

^b Isaiah ix. 1.

Matt. iv. 14.

^c Isaiah xxxv. 5, 6.

^d Psalm xxii. 16, &c.

Zech. xiii. 7.

Isaiah liii.

^e Psalm xvi.

^f Psalm lxxviii. 18.

^g Joel ii. 28.

^h Rom. xi. 26.

world" shall "become the kingdoms of our God and of his Christⁱ." See in the 21st and 22nd chapters of the Book of Revelation, a most magnificent description of the new heavens and the new earth.

If, then, we consider (as Bishop Hurd suggests) these three things in relation to the prophecies of the Bible,—1st, The prodigious *extent of prophecy*, from the Fall of man to the consummation of all things; 2ndly, The *dignity of the Person*, who is the chief subject of prophecy—the Seed of the woman, and the Son of man, yet above all principality and power as the Word and Wisdom of God, the Eternal Son of the Father, the brightness of his Glory, and the express Image of his Person; 3rdly, the declared *purpose* for which this Divine Being came into the world, viz. to deliver a world from ruin, to abolish sin and death, to purify and immortalize human nature;—we may well say, "Tell ye, bring them near," that with such evidence can hesitate to receive the Bible as the word of God; "yea, let them take counsel together: Who hath declared this from ancient time? who hath told it from that time? Have not I the Lord?" Isa. xlv. 21.

Yet, had there been no prophecies in the Bible, would not its wonderful preservation, its moral influence in the world, the agreement of its several parts with each other, the spirit of the writers, their regard to truth, love, holiness, and the glory of God—would not these have gone far towards proving it to be the word of God? What then must be their *united* force? And this, and more than this, we actually possess. But this great subject is thus glanced at, rather to awaken than set at rest inquiry, which, the more it is pursued in a right spirit, will the more deeply convince us, that, in receiving the Bible as the word of God, we have not followed cunningly devised fables; that we may, as it graciously bids us do, build on it our hopes for eternity. John v. 24. 39; vi. 63; x. 27, 28.

Is then the Bible the word of God? and can we think for a moment who God is, and what is our relation to Him as his creatures^j, without feeling that we should listen with deepest attention, and entire submission of our under-

ⁱ Rev. xi. 15.

^j Acts xvii. 28. Rom. xiv. 12.

standing and heart to what it teaches? Let us take warning, from St. Paul's admonition to the Hebrews, not to "turn away from him that speaketh from heaven^k." Let us imitate the example of the Thessalonians, and receive the Bible, "not as the word of man, but as it is in truth, the word of God^l." Like David let us resolve, "I will hear what God the Lord will speak^m." Like Mary let us "ponder these things in our heartⁿ." Like the Bereans let us "search the Scriptures daily^o;" and in a spirit of obedience, let us say, with Samuel, "Speak, Lord, for thy servant heareth^p." And especially, as the Bible is dictated by the Holy Spirit, let it be read with constant prayer for the teaching of that Spirit. Neglect of this direction renders every other, to all practical purposes, useless: this direction patiently followed will open the mind to all "saving truth^q." Nor let the reader ever forget that the evidence for the Divine authority of the Scriptures will only be fully brought home to the minds of those who are willing to live up to its practical precepts.—"If any man will do," i. e. (according to the Greek words) if any man is willing to do, "his will, he shall know of the doctrine whether it be of God^r."

CHAPTER II.

ON THE PURPOSE FOR WHICH THE BIBLE WAS GIVEN.

CONTENTS.—§ i. *State of mankind without the Bible.* § ii. *God's great design in the gift of the Bible.*

THE inquiry proposed in this chapter is most important. The Bible being the word of God, for what purpose was it given?

§ i. *State of mankind without the Bible.*

Consider what, as to religious truth, is, and ever has been, the state of mankind without the Bible.

^k Heb. xii. 25.

^l 1 Thess. ii. 13.

^m Psalm lxxxv. 8.

ⁿ Luke ii. 19. 51.

^o Acts xvii. 11.

^p 1 Sam. iii. 10.

^q Luke xi. 9. 13.

Psalm cxliii. 10.

^r John vii. 17.

“When Adam died, Methuselah was about 200 years old; when Methuselah died, Shem was nearly 100; when Shem died, Abraham was about 150: so that a tradition need pass only through two hands from Adam to Abraham: and yet, within this period, the tradition of the one true God was in a manner extinguished, and the world was generally lapsed into polytheism and idolatry.” Such is the remark of Bishop Newton on the tendency of mankind to corrupt religion, if they have no written revelation; and the same tendency has been found in all the subsequent history of the world.

On a review of what mankind have ever been, when ignorant of that religion which the Bible teaches, we find two remarkable facts.

1st. Their very worship has made them more wicked.

The heathen deities being infamous for the most enormous crimes, their worship consisted frequently in the vilest and most shameful rites. What were called the most holy mysteries, both of Ceres and Bacchus, were full of lewdness; so that, as Dr. Robertson remarks, the more any man honoured such gods, the worse he was himself; and the oftener he served them, the more wicked he became. See Eph. iv. 17—19. 1 Pet. iv. 3.

The dark places of the earth were full of the habitations of cruelty^s as well as licentiousness: almost all heathen nations throughout the world offered human sacrifices,—a custom which neither the Greeks nor the Romans, learned and refined as they were, ever abolished in the countries which they conquered. (Grotius, book ii. § xi.)

Diodorus Siculus gives an account of two hundred children, of the best families in Carthage, being burnt to death as a sacrifice to Saturn (the Moloch of Scripture). From the warning given by Moses to the Israelites^t, it appears that in his time this practice was common among the nations of Canaan, a practice which they adopted from the Tyrians. At Rome, the murder of infants was regulated by the laws of Romulus, and this horrid practice was approved both by Plutarch and Seneca.

2ndly. Civilization (in the absence of true religion) has

^s Psalm lxxiv. 20.

^t Deut. xii. 31.

opposed no check to idolatry; thus forcibly illustrating the remark of the Apostle, that the "world by wisdom knew not God." 1 Cor. i. 21.

The earliest form of idolatry was probably the worship of the heavenly bodies; but in the progress of society, there was nothing too vile and foolish to be worshipped as a god, by some one or other of the heathen nations.

The Egyptians, whose learning was proverbial, and who were in many respects equal, if not superior to us in arts and sciences, (as appears from the ruins yet left of their grandeur,) worshipped bulls, crocodiles, cats, apes, frogs, beetles, serpents. In an extreme famine they chose to eat one another, rather than feed on their imagined deities. The most magnificent temples were erected to their god, the bull Apis. When he died, the whole nation went into mourning. Thus, as Rollin remarks^u, to show what man is when left to himself, God permitted that very nation, which had carried human wisdom to its greatest height, to be the theatre in which the most ridiculous and absurd idolatry was acted.

Mitford observes that even Greece^v, in its early history, had a religion far less degenerate than when it was more civilized. It was from polished Egypt that Greece, when in an uncivilized state, principally learned the absurdities of polytheism. Athens, the most polished city of Greece, the most distinguished for arts and learning, was the most given to idolatry. Ælian calls it the altar of Greece. Pausanias, another heathen historian, tells us that it had more images than all the rest of Greece. Poets, painters, sculptors, whom we still regard as masters, only lent their aid, and philosophers their sanction, to the prevailing superstitions, joining with the common people in the impious and obscene rites of worship which they practised^w. Even Socrates, the greatest of the philosophers of antiquity, not only (as Paley remarks) "did not destroy the idolatry of Athens, or produce the slightest revolution in the manners of his country," but evidently, both by

^u Hist. book i. part ii. chap. 2.

^v Vol. i. p. 102.

^w See Macknight's note on Rom. i. 21; and Augustin, de Civ. Dei, lib. vi. cap. 10, who has shown, by a reference to Seneca's own words, that this illustrious senator worshipped what he reprov'd, acted what he disliked, and adored what he condemned.

precept and example, taught his disciples, in matters of religion, to govern themselves by the custom of the country.

Plutarch states, in his life of Numa, that that king forbade the Romans to represent God under the form of man or beast, and that for 160 years their temples were without images. Numa was the immediate successor of Romulus, the founder of Rome. But in after-ages, in the period of her greater refinement, Rome adopted the gods of almost every nation whom she had conquered, and opened her temples to the grossest superstitions of the most barbarous people, while she persecuted none but Jews and Christians, who alone possessed the light of truth. "And it is painful to think" (remarks Burton^x), "that the first emperor who sanctioned the persecution of Christians by law was Trajan, and that the first magistrate who put the law in force was Pliny; both of these persons, according to heathen notions of morality, being considered amiable, and lovers of justice." See also Dr. Robertson on the situation of the world at the time of Christ's appearing; and the proof which Grotius^y gives of evil spirits being worshipped by the heathen.

The first chapter of the Epistle to the Romans very accurately describes what are men's views of God, and what is their own character, when they have lost the knowledge of true religion. (See particularly verses 23. 29—32.) That chapter was written nearly 2000 years ago; yet so much is human nature the same in every age, that it presents to us a faithful picture of the present state of mankind when placed in the same circumstances. (See Magee on the Atonement, vol. i. p. 15.)

It thus appears that where God has not revealed his will to mankind, they are ignorant on these two points: they are *ignorant of God*; and they are *ignorant of themselves*.

1. They have no just views of the nature and attributes of God.

"History," as is remarked by Edwards, "gives no instance of any nation turning from Atheism or idolatry, to the knowledge and adoration of the one true God, without

^x History of the Christian Church, p. 184.

^y On the Truth of the Christian Religion, book iv. § 3.

the assistance of Revelation ; the Africans, the Tartars, and the ingenious Chinese, have had time enough, one would think, to find out the true and right idea of God ; and yet, after 4000 years' improvements, and the full exercise of reason, they have at this day got no further in their progress towards true religion than to worship stocks, stones, and ' devils^z.'” Bishop Heber's Journal, vol. iii. p. 354, gives a most affecting account of the present state of the religion of the Hindoos, as the great stimulant to crime.

All nations that have not been, directly or indirectly, taught by the Bible, are idolatrous : and in proportion as its circulation has been checked, men have shown a tendency to return to idolatry, as abundantly appears from the history of the Christian Church, during the ninth and two following centuries, and from the present state of those Churches where the circulation of the Scriptures is checked.

After such a view of men's ignorance of God when they have been left without the Bible, it is scarcely necessary to add :—

2. That mankind, without the Bible, are also grossly ignorant of themselves ; they have no just views of their own character and condition.

Facts every where illustrate the truth, that in proportion to men's ignorance of the religion taught in the Bible they “ become vain in their imaginations, and their foolish hearts are darkened^a.” Yet so far from being aware of their folly, they “ profess themselves wise^b ;” they are proud, and boasters, while without understanding ; and they glory in their shame. (See Isa. xlv. 9—20. Acts xvii. 18.)

§ ii. *God's great design in the gift of the Bible.*

Such being and ever having been the state of mankind wherever they have been ignorant of those truths which the Bible records, we may believe that God gave us a written revelation, in order to teach us the knowledge both of Himself, and of our own character and condition ; to show us what He is, and what we are.

^z 1 Cor. x. 20.
1 John v. 19.

^a Rom. i. 21.
^b Rom. i. 22.

But we must go a step further, and ask, What is the amount of this knowledge of God and of ourselves, which we derive from the Holy Scriptures?

God gave us the Bible that we might know his holiness, and our own unholiness.

He gave it us also that we might know his mercy, and the remedy of sin.

It is said by Bishop Butler^c, that "the world being in a state of apostasy and wickedness, and consequently of ruin, a Divine Person, the Messiah, took upon Himself the office of Mediator, in order to the recovery of the world."

Now it is from the Holy Scriptures that we learn both the necessity for this mediation, and the terms on which it was accepted by the Father. Gen. ii. 17; iii. 16—19; Rom. v. 1—21; iii. 21—26.

In another passage^d the same author says, "that Christianity contains a revelation of a particular dispensation of Providence, carrying on by the Son and Holy Spirit for the recovery and salvation of mankind, who are represented in Scripture as in a state of ruin." And again^e, "the Son and Spirit have each his proper office in that great dispensation of Providence, the redemption of the world: the one, our Mediator; the other, our Sanctifier."

These are the great truths revealed to us in the Holy Scriptures. 1 John v. 11, 12. Eph. ii. 18.

In one word, then, the purpose for which God gave us the Bible was to "make us wise unto salvation^f." (1.) It shows the necessity for salvation; (2.) It explains the nature of that salvation; and, (3.) It becomes, as the instrument of the Spirit, "the power of God unto salvation to every one that believes." Rom. i. 16. See also John xvii. 17. Eph. vi. 17. 1 Pet. i. 23.

That this is the great purpose of the New Testament, may appear too obvious to require illustration; but that this is the general design of the Old Testament also, may be shown from its first few pages.

The *historical* part of the Old Testament gives neither a history of the world, nor a history of the Jews, but such a selection from both as Infinite Wisdom saw to be best

^c Analogy, Introd.

^d Analogy, part ii. chap. i.

^e Ibid.

^f 2 Tim. iii. 15.

adapted to make mankind "wise unto salvation." 2 Tim. iii. 15. Rom. xv. 4.

It begins with an account of God's creating the world, and of his forming man in his own image. This account was published at a time when nearly all mankind, except the Jews, were given up to idolatry, and when the Jews themselves were in the greatest danger of falling into it. The account of the Creation is therefore to be considered, as Bishop Butler has remarked, as an assertion on the part of the One Great Moral Governor of the world, that it is his world; and that when it came from his hands, it was "very good."

But this account of the Creation, scarcely occupying more than one chapter, is evidently introductory to its main object, the announcement of man's *fall*, and the discovery of the means by which alone he could be *restored* to God's favour.

In what immediately follows, many hundred years of man's history are rapidly passed over, and only so much is given as illustrates the awful effects of the *fall*. Hence the account of Cain, and of the rapid progress of wickedness generally throughout the world; till, by the deluge, God proclaimed to mankind, what Adam's sentence had failed to teach, how deeply man had fallen under the displeasure of his Maker: in order that, seeing how he rushed into sin, and involved himself in destruction, we might learn how much he needed a *Redeemer* to restore him to the Divine favour, and a *Sanctifier* to renew him unto holiness.

In the midst, however, of the darkness of this scene, such a selection of facts is made, as, faintly indeed, but really, holds out the prospect of man's *recovery*. Before the deluge, this is seen in the great promise to Adam^h, and in its effect on his descendants, Abel, Seth, Enos, Enoch, and Noah. They lived by faith in that promise; they "called upon the name of the Lordⁱ;" they "walked with him^j;" and through the merits of the Lamb, whose death was pre-figured to them by *animal sacrifice*, they found grace in

g Ezek. xx.

Exod. xxxii.

Numb. xiv. 4; xxv. 2.

h Gen. iii. 15.

i Gen. iv. 26.

j Gen. v. 24.

his sight^k. They did not strive against Him^l, but, being led by the Holy Spirit, they were renewed in heart by Him; and thus they may be considered as the first-fruits of redemption.

We are told of the repeopling of the world by Noah and his sons; and then of the building of the tower of Babel (another terrible instance of the perverseness of man). After this, the general history of mankind is abandoned, and only so far glanced at as it bears on the history of a particular person, Abraham, and of particular branches of his family, through whom the Saviour was in the fulness of time to come; and even of Abraham and his family only so much is recorded as bears on the one great purpose of man's salvation^m.

Again: a part of the Old Testament is *prophetic*, but (as has been sufficiently shown at page 36) its prophecies tend to the same great purpose, of making us "wise unto salvation."

Again: a part of the Old Testament, as the Book of Psalms, is *devotional*; but then its devotion is adapted to the recovery of a fallen being: it is calculated to make us "wise unto salvation," by teaching us how, as sinners, we may address God with suitable feelings and suitable language. In this book the infinitely great and glorious God is presented to us as we ought to think of Him when we would pray to Him or praise Him; the joys and sorrows of those sincerely struggling against sin are displayed to us; while at the same time it constantly directs us to Christ, and shows us our need of that Divine help which

^k Gen. vi. 8.

Eph. i. 4.

^l Pet. i. 20.

Rev. xiii. 8.

Also compare Gen. iv. 4, with

Heb. xi. 4.

¹ Gen. vi. 3.

^m For instance, the first notice of the kingdom of Assyria, since the days of Nimrod, who erected a kingdom there (Gen. x. 11), is in 2 Kings xv. 19: from the time of Moses till the time of Solomon no mention is made in the Bible of the kings of Egypt; and Ishmael (though a son of Abraham) and his descendants are very soon unnoticed. We thus see an illustration of Boyle's remark, that with regard to Scripture, its very silences are teaching.

it is the great work of the Holy Spirit to impart. Psalm li. 10. 12; cxliii. 10.

The same general remarks apply to what may be called the *moral* or *preceptive* parts of the Old Testament, where the duties we owe to God and each other are enforced—for instance, the Ten Commandments.

These rules, applied to our conduct, show the necessity of redemption by Christ. In the law of God we have a reflection of his attributes; and by a comparison of ourselves with that law, we may see our own characterⁿ: so that the Law may thus become our schoolmaster to bring us to Christ^o, and to make us to feel the need of his Spirit.

As the Psalms are a heavenly guide to our intercourse with God, so are the Proverbs to our intercourse with men. The Book of Job exhibits the afflictions of life; Ecclesiastes the vanity of its enjoyments. And the practical effect of them all is to teach us, that “denying ungodliness and worldly lusts, we should live soberly, righteously, and godly in this present world, looking for that blessed hope, and the glorious appearing of the great God and our Saviour Jesus Christ.” Tit. ii. 12, 13.

Taking then this general view of the purpose of God in giving the Bible, we may consider that in its *historical*, its *prophetical*, its *devotional*, and its *moral* parts, God had one uniform object; viz. to “make us wise unto salvation, through faith which is in Christ Jesus^p,” and it is important that this view should be deeply impressed upon our minds, if we wish either to inform ourselves or to instruct others in the knowledge of its truths. It is the key to all its treasures.

To assist in the attainment of this object in reading the Holy Scripture, the following advice of Archbishop Secker may here be introduced:

After urging the necessity of mixing faith with what we read, and of applying by prayer to Him who alone can give us a saving faith; after reminding us of the excellent Collect for the Second Sunday in Advent, which is so suitable a prayer for the occasion, he says, “Let the

ⁿ Rom. vii. 7.

^o Gal. iii. 24.

Rom. x. 4; viii. 9.

^p 2 Tim. iii. 15.

reader stop on fit occasions, and think, What consolation does this passage administer to me? what acknowledgment to Heaven doth this declaration require from me? what fear for myself doth this threatening call for? what duty doth this precept or pattern point out to me? of what sin doth it convince me? is my character and behaviour suitable to this command or exhortation, this description or good example? or do I see myself here, under another name, reprov'd, condemn'd, stigmatized? Have I acquired that sense of my own sinfulness and weakness, of God's holiness and justice, and of my need of the merits of Christ, and the grace of the Divine Spirit, which the whole tenor of Scripture inculcates? or am I still inclined to stand or fall by my own righteousness?"

The following passage, from Bishop Butler's Analogy, refers to the texts of Scripture which chiefly explain Christ's office as Mediator between God and man, which is usually treated of under the three heads of Prophet, Priest, and King:

*"He is the Light of the world"^q, the revealer of the will of God in the most eminent sense. He is a propitiatory sacrifice^r; the Lamb of God^s; and as He voluntarily offered Himself up, He is styled our High Priest^t, being described beforehand in the Old Testament under the same character of a priest and an expiatory victim^u. The sacred writers also affirm, that *He suffered for sins, the just for the unjust*^v: that *He gave his life, Himself, a ransom*^w: that *we are bought, bought with a price*^x: that *He redeemed us with his blood; redeemed us from the curse of the law, being made a curse for us*^y: that He is our advocate, intercessor, and propitiation^z: that *He was made**

^q John i. and viii. 12.

^r Rom. iii. 25, and v. 11.

1 Cor. v. 7.

Eph. v. 2.

1 John ii. 2.

Matt. xxvi. 28.

^s John i. 29. 36, and throughout the Book of Revelation.

^t Throughout the Epistle to the Hebrews.

^u Isaiah liii.

Dan. ix. 24. Psalm cx. 4.

^v 1 Pet. iii. 18.

^w Matt. xx. 28.

Mark x. 45.

1 Tim. ii. 6.

^x 2 Pet. ii. 1.

Rev. xiv. 4.

1 Cor. vi. 20.

^y 1 Pet. i. 18, 19.

Rev. v. 9.

Gal. iii. 13.

^z Heb. vii. 25.

1 John ii. 1, 2.

perfect or consummate, through sufferings : and being thus made perfect, He became the author of salvation^a : that God was in Christ reconciling the world to Himself, by the death of his Son, by the cross ; not imputing their trespasses unto them^b : and lastly, that through death He destroyed him that had the power of death^c. Christ then having thus humbled Himself, and become obedient unto death, even the death of the cross, God also hath highly exalted Him, and given Him a name which is above every name : hath given all things into his hands ; hath committed all judgment unto Him, that all men should honour the Son even as they honour the Father^d. For worthy is the Lamb that was slain to receive power, and riches, and wisdom, and strength, and honour, and glory, and blessing. And every creature which is in heaven, and on the earth, heard I saying, Blessing, and honour, and glory, and power, be unto Him that sitteth upon the throne, and unto the Lamb for ever and ever^e.”—Analogy, Part ii. chap. v.

In the same connexion Bishop Butler speaks of the agency of the Holy Spirit, as the Spirit of Christ, also exercising an invisible government over his Church ; *for the perfecting of the saints, for the edifying of his body ; till we all come in the unity of the faith, and of the knowledge of the Son of God, unto a perfect man, unto the measure of the stature of the FULNESS OF CHRIST.* Eph. iv. 12, 13. See also 1 Pet. i. 2, which, as Bishop Hurd remarks, contains the substance of the plan of salvation.

CHAPTER III.

ON THE MANNER IN WHICH THE GREAT TRUTHS OF
THE BIBLE HAVE BEEN REVEALED.

CONTENTS.—*Successive revelations to fallen man, the filling up of an outline at first given : illustrated in reference to—§ i. The nature and attributes of God. § ii. The character and prospects of man. § iii. The great work of man's redemption.*

“MEN are impatient,” says Bishop Butler, “and are for precipitating things ; but God appears deliberate through-

^a Heb. ii. 10, and v. 9.

^b 2 Cor. v. 19.

Rom. v. 10.

Eph. ii. 16.

^c Heb. ii. 14. See also a re-

markable passage in the Book of Job, xxxiii. 24.

^d Phil. ii. 8, 9.

John iii. 35, and v. 22, 23.

^e Rev. v. 12, 13.

out his operations, accomplishing his ends by slow successive steps. The change of the seasons—the ripening of the fruits of the earth—the very history of a flower—are instances of this.”—So is the Bible.

The Bible contains the record of God’s revelations to man from the beginning, and presents to us this, as a distinguishing feature of those revelations,—that they are as the filling up of an outline at first given—the expansion of a seed containing within itself the elements of a future plant, as the acorn does of the oak. Matt. xiii. 31.

In the preceding chapter, p. 43, it was said that God gave us the Bible to teach (1) what He is; and (2) what we are; and (3) what is the nature of that dispensation of mercy, through the Son and Holy Spirit, by which God can be “just, and the justifier of him that believeth in Jesus:†” and by which the sinner, restored to the Divine favour and image, may be qualified for the full enjoyment of God for ever. See John xvii. 21.

The object of this chapter is to show the manner in which these great truths have been revealed.

§ i. *The manner in which the nature and attributes of God have been revealed.*

I. The nature of God.—To us, who know so little even of our own nature, the nature of God is an overwhelming subject—and needs the deepest humility in the contemplation of it.

At the very beginning God clearly revealed the unity of his nature, but for 4000 years afterwards, He only indistinctly made known that in the unity of his nature there were three Persons.

Some intimation of this truth, however, is probably given in the very first chapter of the first book of the Bible, where it seems to be implied, that there is a plurality of Persons in the Godhead, “Let *Us* make man in *Our* image, after *Our* likeness^g,” again, “Man is become as one of *Us*^h,” and again, “Let *Us* go downⁱ.”

† Rom. iii. 26.

g Gen. i. 26.

h Gen. iii. 22.

i Gen. xi. 7.

In other books of Scripture may be traced the same intimation. Thus, "Holy, Holy, Holy, is the Lord of Hosts^e;" and again, "Who will go for Us^f?" are passages "evidently calculated," as Dr. Smith remarks, "to excite a remote conception in the mind of the original hearer or reader, of a plurality of some kind in the Infinite Essence." See also Is. xlviii. 16, translated by Lowth. "Now the Lord Jehovah hath sent Me and his Spirit."

Again, a person is described in the Old Testament under various titles, (but particularly that of the Angel of the Lord,) to whom the name and attributes of Jehovah are given, yet who is distinct from God, and acts, as the term Angel imports, under a Divine commission. Compare these two passages: "The angel of the Lord found her by a fountain of water in the wilderness^g." "And she called the name of the Lord that spake unto her, 'Thou God seest me^h.'" Thus Hagar calls Him God; and Moses, the writer of this passage, calls Him LORDⁱ; i. e. Jehovah.

The later Prophets dwell yet more distinctly on this; as, for instance, "Unto us a child is born, unto us a son is given; and the government shall be upon his shoulder: and his name shall be called Wonderful, Counsellor, THE MIGHTY GOD, The everlasting Father, The Prince of Peace^k;" evidently identifying this mysterious person with the promised Messiah. See also Micah v. 2. Zech. xiii. 7.

So also, while we must look to the New Testament for the full view of the person and office of the Holy Spirit, yet in the Old Testament also He is spoken of in terms which imply his personality and office. See Gen. i. 2; vi. 3. 2 Sam. xxiii. 2. Ps. li. 11, 12; cxliii. 10. Is. xlviii. 16; lxi. 1; lxiii. 10. Ezek. iii. 24. 27.

That the germ of the great doctrine of the Trinity is discoverable in the Old Testament, may be seen in a very remarkable manner by comparing the Mosaic form of

^e Isaiah vi. 3.

^g Gen. xvi. 7.

^f Isaiah vi. 8.

^h Gen. xvi. 13.

ⁱ Where "Lord" is printed in capital letters, it is, in the original, Jehovah, or self-existing, independent Being.

^k Isaiah ix. 6.

blessing¹ with that used by St. Paul^m, and also with the form of words appointed to be used by our Blessed Lord in baptismⁿ.

II. The attributes of God, in what manner revealed.

By the attributes of God are here meant his power, wisdom, justice, goodness, &c. In this sense, then, we remark, that the outline of these attributes may be traced in the first three chapters of Genesis, especially in God's first revelation to fallen man, as contained in the third chapter. It is essentially the same character as that presented to us throughout the Bible. But as we proceed, the character of God opens to our view; and this is particularly the case in the history of the Jews, one object of whose selection doubtless was (for God accomplishes many purposes by one act) the gradual display of his character to man^o. To them God gave, during a period of nearly 2000 years, many declarations respecting Himself—many laws, promises, threats—many sensible proofs of his government of them; stating in many instances the reasons of his conduct; and these become so many illustrations of God's attributes, exhibiting, in a great variety of lights, his power, wisdom, holiness, justice, goodness, &c.

The Bible is peculiarly and inestimably valuable, because it contains such an accumulation of facts, selected by God Himself, as enables us, in many instances, to trace events to their moral causes; and thus to see the reasons which God, as Governor of the world, had for permitting them. These facts thus become (to adopt the words of Rollin) "so many keys to open to us the path to the secret method by which He governs the world and us." In the ordinary course of God's providence, we know not (to use a Scriptural illustration) whether they on whom the tower of Siloam fell, were or were not sinners above all the dwellers in Jerusalem; we are in great danger of tracing the event to a wrong cause, and in so doing may be led to act as well as think wrongly on the subject, as in the case of Micah^p; in that of Saul^q; in that of Abishai^r; in that of

¹ Numb. vi. 24—26.

^m 2 Cor. xiii. 14.

ⁿ Matt. xxviii. 19.

^o Exod. vi. 3; xxxiv. 5—7.

^p Judges xvii. 13.

^q 1 Sam. xxiii. 7.

^r 1 Sam. xxvi. 8.

Job^s; and in that of St. Paul^t. In the case of Abimelech, on the contrary, on whose head a certain woman cast a piece of millstone from a tower, and brake his skull, the Scriptures themselves tell us, that God thus punished him for the wickedness which he had done in slaying his seventy brethren^u. The moral cause, therefore, of the event being given us by God Himself, the event becomes a proof to us of God's justice in the punishment of sin, and a warning to every sinner, that sooner or later his punishment will come upon him. See also the case of Adonibezek, Judges i. 7; and that of Joab, 1 Kings ii. 32.

These are instances of God's justice: others are given of his long-suffering; his faithfulness to his promises; his readiness to hear prayer, to pardon sin, &c.^v; his exact notice of men's motives, as in the case of Lot's wife^w, and of Joash^x; and his punishment of those He most loves, as in the case of Moses smiting the rock^y, of David numbering the people^z, and Hezekiah showing his treasures^a. From these facts we are solemnly warned, that "by God our actions are weighed^b;" and that He "searcheth all hearts, and understandeth all the imaginations of the thoughts^c." Illustrations are also given of his providence, calculated to inspire in those who serve Him the greatest confidence in his protection. Of this the history of Joseph is a most striking display, showing how God, without appearing in the least to disturb the ordinary course of men's actions, causes the worst evils to bring about the greatest good; the envy of Joseph's brethren; the false accusation of Potiphar's wife; and the consequent imprisonment of Joseph, all contributing to that advancement by which God enabled him to preserve the infant Church from famine. See Gen. l. 20. Ps. cv. 17.

Many similar instances might be mentioned. He supplies help to his people from quarters whence they would

^s Job iv. 7.

^t Acts xxviii. 1—6.

^u Judges ix. 52—56.

^v Psalm lxxviii.

2 Chron. xxxiii. 12, 13.

Jonah ii.

Luke xxiii. 42, 43.

^w Gen. xix. 26.

^x 2 Kings xiii. 19.

^y Numb. xx. 12.

^z 2 Sam. xxiv. 10—15.

^a 2 Chron. xxxii. 25.

^b 1 Sam. ii. 3.

^c 1 Chron. xxviii. 9.

least expect it^d: He controls what seems most accidental^e: He brings about the most important events by circumstances apparently the most trifling^f. He disappoints the evil which the wicked intend^g; and leads them to do the good which they never intended^h; He makes them the instrument of each other's punishmentⁱ, and of his predetermined will. Thus David's establishment on the throne of Israel was brought about chiefly by the crimes of his enemies, and their destruction of each other; as, for instance, in the desertion of Ishbosheth by Abner^j, and the subsequent murder of him by Rechab and Baanah^k. Thus also Jeroboam in making his plot, the young men in giving bad advice, and Rehoboam in following it, all acted as their own passions and evil designs suggested, and yet accomplished the purpose of God, which He had declared by Ahijah, 1 Kings xii. 15. Compare also Acts ii. 23. Col. ii. 14, 15.

From facts, thus traced by God Himself to their causes through the course of thousands of years, showing as they do what is pleasing or displeasing to Him, and how He has acted towards others under every variety of circumstance in which we can be placed, we may learn how to behave towards Him, and what to expect from Him; for by his moral government in things temporal thus explained to us, God shows us the great principles upon which our eternal interests will be determined. That the history of the Jews was miraculous, does not render it less instructive to us in this respect; for miracles do not alter the principles upon which God acts; they only illustrate those principles in a more striking manner. The punishment of Uzziah by leprosy^l, and the deliverance of the three children of Israel from the fiery furnace^m, and of Daniel from the lions' denⁿ, were miraculous; but they are only more striking illustrations of a principle from which God never departs, and which will be fully developed in the day of judgment, that

^d Jer. xxxviii. 7—13.

Acts xvi. 33.

^e 1 Kings xxii. 34. 38.

^f 1 Sam. ix. 3. 15, 16.

Judges vii. 13—15.

^g 2 Sam. xvii. 14. Neh. xiii. 2.

^h Neh. xiii. 2.

ⁱ Judges ix. 1—6. 34—49.

^j 2 Sam. iii. 8—12.

^k 2 Sam. iv. 8.

^l 2 Chron. xxvi. 19.

^m Dan. iii. 24—27.

ⁿ Dan. vi. 21—23.

“them that honour him he will honour, and they that despise him shall be lightly esteemed.” 1 Sam. ii. 30.

The foundation of all our knowledge of God, as derived from the Bible, is that He is unchangeable^o; that what was pleasing or displeasing to Him in any of his creatures—for instance, in Abel or Adam—6000 years ago, is equally so now. Without respect of persons, He judges according to every man’s work; and that by a rule which never varies^p: from this great truth it follows, that the method of God’s dealing with any rational creature is the common concern of all^q. But as by a long observation of his conduct, of what He says and does, especially if He condescend to acquaint us with his motives, we become gradually acquainted with the character of a fellow-creature, so God, “with whom is no variableness, neither shadow of turning^r,” may be said in the Bible to have made Himself known to man. In the fulness of time, when the “Word was made flesh, and dwelt among us^s,” this knowledge of God was enlarged, for in the only begotten Son, “who is in the bosom of the Father,” we were called to see “the light of the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ.” 2 Cor. iv. 6. See also John i. 18; xiv. 9.

Yet, with regard to this glorious manifestation of the Divine attributes, it may be truly said, “Lo, these are parts of his ways; but how little a portion is heard of him^t!” Even here “we see through a glass darkly^u.” But eternity is before us; and “increasing in the knowledge of God^v” will be, through eternity, the delightful employment of all those who are now seeking to know Him as He is revealed in Christ. Compare John xvii. 3, with 2 Thess. i. 8: the awful contrast, which is thus presented, suggests a most urgent motive for self-examination and prayer. See Ps. xxv. 4.

^o Mal. iii. 6. Heb. xiii. 8.

^p “The following references will show, that in the description which the Scripture gives of God, it lays it down as a prominent feature of his character, that He is no respecter of persons; by which is to be understood, that his conduct towards mankind proceeds on principles which are in their own nature general, and impartially applied. Deut. x. 17. 2 Chron. xix. 7. Rom. ii. 11. Gal. ii. 6. Eph. vi. 9. Col. iii. 25. 1 Pet. i. 17.”

^q 2 Pet. ii. 4.

^s John i. 14.

^u 1 Cor. xiii. 12.

1 Cor. x. 11.

^t Job xxvi. 14.

^v Col. i. 10.

^r James i. 17.

§ ii. *The character and prospects of man, in what manner revealed.*

I. The character of man, in what manner revealed.

It has been already remarked, that the Holy Scriptures present throughout, from Genesis to Revelation, the same views of human nature^x; Cain and Abel are, in the essential principles of their character, the representatives of the two great classes into which all mankind may be divided to the end of time^y. But we acquire a deeper insight into human nature by an accumulation of facts illustrating the effects of God's grace and the power of sin upon it. And in this manner the Holy Scriptures instruct us.

1. *Particular examples are given of the effects of God's grace.*

When it is said that "Enoch walked with God^z," this may be considered to contain the principle of all that is excellent in character. But in the Bible, facts are accumulated illustrating this principle; details are given which exhibit the graces imparted to men by the Spirit of God^a, under every variety of circumstance. The sacred historian passes by those which the world calls great events, and which are the usual subjects of history. While the mighty empires of Babylon and Nineveh^b, and the progress of the arts and sciences in Egypt are overlooked by him, incidents in the lives of obscure individuals are recorded. Thus more is said about Abraham's servant^c, than about Nimrod^d, the great conqueror who built Babylon and Nineveh. Details of the domestic lives of Abraham, Isaac, Jacob, Naomi, and Ruth, &c., are presented to us, because in these are illustrated the effects of God's grace on the human heart under circumstances where we most need the illustration of it—as in the relations of parent, child, brother, husband and wife, mother-in-law and daughter-in-law, master and servant, and in the duties, temptations, and afflictions, which arise out of these relations. The

^x Psalm xxxiii. 15.

Prov. xxvii. 19.

^y 1 John iii. 10—12.

^z Gen. v. 24.

^a Gal. v. 22.

^b Gen. x. 10, 11.

^c Gen. xxiv.

^d Gen. x. 8—11.

character of Noah presents a bright example of perseverance in well-doing. He appears, as Bishop Horne remarks, like the lily among thorns, diffusing its sweetness in the desert,—a light burning and shining amid the darkness of sin. In the character of Job we are taught patience^c; in that of Moses, meekness^d; in that of Caleb, decision^e. Hannah is a pattern to mothers^f; Samuel^g and Josiah^h, to children; Joseph, to young menⁱ; Barzillai, to the aged^j; Eliezer of Damascus, to servants^k; Daniel, to those under authority^l. Nehemiah and Esther are objects of imitation for their patriotism^m; Jonathan, as a friend in his conduct towards David, and as a son in his conduct towards Saul: he did not forget what was due to his father, even when that father was unjustly seeking to destroy Davidⁿ. David's conduct to Saul shows us how to overcome evil with good^o. So that there is gradually presented to us, embodied in the example of some one recorded in the Bible, an illustration of every duty to which we are called. And this remark applies still more strongly to the New Testament, in which is presented to us the perfect example of our Lord, and in which we are exhorted, by the assistance of Divine grace, to attain to all excellence by following the 'blessed steps of his most holy life.'

2. *Particular examples are given of the cause and effects of sin.*

(1.) The power of sin even in the true servants of God.—Observe the want of confidence in God displayed by the father of the faithful^p; the impatience of the most patient^q; the irritability of the meekest^r; the grievous fall of him who had shown such early, long-tried, and eminent devotion, and who was so distinguished a type of the great Messiah^s: and, lastly, the idolatry of the wisest of men^t.

(2.) The various forms of sin in the wicked.—Thus we

^c Job i. and ii.

^d Numb. xii. 3.

^e Numb. xiv. 24.

^f 1 Sam. i. 27, 28.

^g 1 Sam. iii.

^h 2 Chron. xxxiv. 3.

ⁱ Gen. xxxix. 9.

^j 2 Sam. xix. 34, 35.

^k Gen. xxiv.

^l Dan. vi.

^m Neh. i. 4; v. 14.

Esth. iv. 16.

ⁿ 1 Sam. xviii.; xix. 4—6.

^o 1 Sam. xxiv. 7; xxvi. 9.

^p Gen. xii. 11—13.

^q Job iii. 3, &c.

^r Numb. xx. 10—12.

^s 2 Sam. xi.

^t 1 Kings xi. 4—8.

find envy in Joseph's brethren^u; hatred in Esau^v; malice in Saul^w; slander in Doeg^x and Ziba^y; contempt for God's ministers in Korah^z; sedition and rebellion in the demagogue Absalom^a, who "preached political freedom in the chains of moral bondage;" ambition in Abimelech^b; revenge in Athaliah^c; covetousness in Achan^d and Gehazi^e; pride in Nebuchadnezzar^f; neglect of warnings in his grandson Belshazzar^g; daring impiety in Pharaoh and Hiel^h, who, like Ahazⁱ, trespassed yet more in their affliction. Adonijah is represented as a spoiled child, harassing his father when he most needed his comfort^j. Ahasuerus is capricious^k; Zedekiah undecided^l, consulting Jeremiah, but wanting resolution to follow his directions; Rehoboam is headstrong^m; Ahithophel worldlywiseⁿ; Johanan hypocritical^o; Sanballat and Tobiah are scoffers^p; Joab appears as a brave soldier, and in many instances a faithful servant—in the taking of Rabbah, preferring David's glory to his own^q; not deserting him when almost all others did to join Absalom: fearlessly expostulating with David against the sin of numbering the people^r; yet a "doer of evil;" co-operating with David in the murder of Uriah; assassinating Abner^s and Amasa^t through jealousy of their merit and power; and in direct opposition to the appointment of God^u siding with Adonijah against Solomon^v. Jehoram, king of Israel, is found cleaving to the sin of Jeroboam, though he put away the image of Baal^w, and neglecting the advice of Elisha, though he was curious to hear of his miracles^x. While, in another age of the Church, Herod feared the

^u Gen. xxxvii. 11.^v Gen. xxvii. 41.^w 1 Sam. xviii. 28, 29.^x 1 Sam. xxii. 9.^y 2 Sam. xvi. 1, &c.^z Numb. xvi. 3.^a 2 Sam. xv. 3. 10.^b Judges ix. 1—5.^c 2 Kings xi. 1—3.^d Josh. vii. 1. 21; vi. 19.^e 2 Kings v. 20.^f Dan. iv. 30.^g Dan. v. 22.^h 1 Kings xvi. 34.ⁱ 2 Chron. xxviii. 22.^j 1 Kings i. 5.^k Esth. iii. 12; viii. 9.^l Jer. xxxviii. 19, 20.^m 1 Kings xii.ⁿ 2 Sam. xvii.^o Jer. xlii. 3. 20.^p Neh. iv. 1—3.^q 2 Sam. xii. 28.^r 2 Sam. xxiv. 3.^s 2 Sam. iii. 27. 39.^t 2 Sam. xx. 10.^u 1 Chron. xxviii. 5.^v 1 Kings i. 19.^w 2 Kings iii. 1—3.^x 2 Kings viii. 4.

Baptist, and heard him gladly, although he refused to put away his brother's wife. Mark vi. 16—20.

(3.) The progress of sin; as in Saul and Amaziah. Contrast Saul's humility^y, his command of temper^z, and his spirit of forgiveness^a, with his wounded pride^b, his violence of temper^c, and his spirit of murder against David^d, Jonathan^e, and the priests^f. Observe how deep, at one time, were his convictions, and yet he perished at last in his iniquity^g; and with regard to Amaziah, see 2 Chron. xxv. 2. 9, 10. 14—27. From these examples we may learn, as Gisborne remarks, that no former acts of righteousness, no former sacrifices of self-interest, for conscience' sake, will avail us as an excuse for indulging afterwards in sin.

(4.) The vain excuses made for the commission of sin; particularly by laying the blame on others, as in the case of Adam and Eve^h, Aaronⁱ, Ahab^j, and Jehoram^k.

(5.) The self-deceit which accompanies sin; as in David^l and Balaam^m. David showed a quick susceptibility to the injustice of others, while unconscious of his own far greater injustice: and Balaam expressed this pious wish, "Let me die the death of the righteous, and let my last end be like hisⁿ," at the very moment when he was running greedily after "the wages of unrighteousness^o;" thus showing that men can think on the most solemn subjects without any change of life, and, as Bishop Butler remarks, that passive impressions (that is, impressions not followed up by action) serve only to harden the heart.—Analogy, Part I. chap. v.

(6.) The prejudices which oppose the reception of truth; as in the conduct of Naaman towards Elisha^p, of the scribes and Pharisees towards our Lord^q, of the Jews towards the Apostles^r, and of the Athenians^s and Ephesians^t towards St. Paul.

y 1 Sam. ix. 21; x. 16; xi. 5.

z 1 Sam. x. 27.

a 1 Sam. xi. 13.

b 1 Sam. xviii. 8.

c 1 Sam. xx. 30.

d 1 Sam. xix. 1—15.

e 1 Sam. xx. 33.

f 1 Sam. xxii. 18.

g 1 Sam. xxiv. 16, 17; xxvi. 21; xxxi. 4.

1 Chron. x. 13.

h Gen. iii. 12, 13.

i Exod. xxxii. 22, 23.

j 1 Kings xviii. 17.

k 2 Kings vi. 33.

l 2 Sam. xii. 5—7.

m Numb. xxii. 24.

n Numb. xxiii. 10.

o 2 Pet. ii. 15. See Jude 11.

p 2 Kings v. 11, 12.

q John ix.; xii. 10, 11, &c.

r Acts iv. 16, 17; xiii. 45; xv.

s Acts xvii. 18.

t Acts xix. 28.

(7.) The force of habit: as in Ahab, who humbled himself at the preaching of Elijah^u, and yet returned to idolatry^v; and in Felix, who trembled at the preaching of St. Paul, and yet did not give up his evil practices. Acts xxiv. 25, 26.

(8.) The corrupt motives of right conduct: as in Jehu destroying the prophets of Baal. 2 Kings x. See Hos. i. 4.

(9.) The manner in which circumstances develop the human character, and show how little men are acquainted with themselves; as in Hazael, when raised to a throne^w; and in Joash, king of Judah, after the death of his uncle Jehoiada^x.

(10.) The evil of ungodly connexions: as in the case of Esau's marrying with those who were under the curse of God^y; and in that of Solomon, whom "outlandish women" caused to sin^z. Jehoshaphat's connexion with Ahab by the marriage of his son with Athaliah nearly led to the destruction of his whole family^a; and if Ahab had not had Jezebel for his wife, he might never have been guilty of the murder of Naboth^b.

(11.) The danger of worldly prosperity. That which should call forth gratitude, and increased devotedness to God, produces forgetfulness of Him, as in the cases of Rehoboam^c, Uzziah^d, and Hezekiah^e.

3. *General views are given of human nature.*

(1.) Thus immediately before the Deluge, it is said, "that every imagination of the thoughts of man's heart was only evil continually^f;" and again, immediately after that event, that "the imagination of man's heart is evil from his youth^g." In Job, written probably about 800 years after the Deluge, it is said that man "is filthy and abominable^h." David, 500 years after thisⁱ, Jeremiah, 500 years after David^j, Paul, 500 years after Jeremiah^k, give the same view.

^u 1 Kings xxi. 27.

^v 1 Kings xxii. 6.

^w 2 Kings viii. 12, 13.

^x 2 Chron. xxiv. 2. 17, 18.

^y Gen. xxvi. 34.

^z 1 Kings xi. 1—8.

^a Neh. xiii. 26.

^b 2 Kings viii. 18—26; xi. 1.

^b 1 Kings xxi. 7. 25.

^c 2 Chron. xii. 1.

^d 2 Chron. xxvi. 16.

^e 2 Chron. xxxii. 25.

^f Gen. vi. 5.

^g Gen. viii. 21.

^h Job xv. 16.

ⁱ Psalm xiv. 2, 3.

^j Jer. xvii. 9.

^k Rom. iii. 10—18.

(2.) And these general views are illustrated in the Bible on a great scale in the history of the Jews. For many hundreds of years they were made the objects of God's peculiar care; they were miraculously governed—instructed by inspired teachers—entrusted with the oracles of God—enriched in every way by the most extraordinary privileges¹; yet, generation after generation, they abused those privileges; they rebelled against God, and slew his prophets; at length they denied the Holy One and the Just, desiring a murderer to be granted to them; they killed the Prince of Life; and after his resurrection, “counted the blood of the covenant an unholy thing, and did despite unto the Spirit of Grace.” Heb. x. 29.

Thus to us who have the whole record of God's will, with what accumulated proof is our natural depravity confirmed!

II. The prospects of man, in what manner revealed.

1. *The prospects of the righteous, in what manner revealed.*

The first man that died, died for religion^m; thus intimating that the reward of righteousness was not in this world; as Bishop Hall remarks, “Death was denounced to man as a curse, yet behold it first lights upon a saint; how soon was it altered by the mercy of that just hand which inflicted it! If death had been evil and life good, Cain had been slain, and Abel had survived. Now that it begins with him that God loves, O death, where is thy sting?” Enoch's translation, scarcely 50 years after the death of Adam, was an intimation of a life to comeⁿ. Under the Old Testament dispensation, the Patriarchs looked for a better, even a heavenly country^o, and “confessed that they were strangers and pilgrims on the earth.” That the dead are raised, Moses showed at the bush^p. Six hundred years after Moses, and more than 2000 years after the translation of Enoch, the Church was again cheered, in the translation of Elijah, by a glimpse of the same glorious hope; and the Prophets spoke of it with more

¹ Deut. iv. 33.

Isaiah v. 1—7.

^m Gen. iv. 8.

¹ John iii. 12.

ⁿ Heb. xi.

^o Gen. xlix. 18.

Job xix. 25.

Heb. xi. 10. 13. 16.

^p Luke xx. 37, 38.

distinctness^q. It was however by the Gospel that life and immortality were *brought to light*^r: till then, eye had not seen, nor ear heard, neither had it entered into the heart of man to conceive the things which God had prepared for them that love Him, and which He then “revealed by the Spirit^s.”

2. *The prospects of the wicked, in what manner revealed.*

As to the punishment awaiting the wicked in a future state, while traces of it are discernible from the beginning^t, yet it is to the Gospel, to the declarations of our Blessed Lord^u, and his Apostles^v, that we must turn for the full disclosure of that indignation and wrath, tribulation and anguish, which shall be the eternal portion of the finally impenitent^w: and it is indeed an awful fact, that the most fearful denunciations of wrath to come are from the lips of the Saviour. See Luke xvi. 23; xx. 18.

§ iii. *The great work of man's redemption, in what manner revealed.*

Together with the illustrations of God's holiness and man's depravity, which show man's need of redemption, the Bible gradually unfolds the nature of that redemption. When this illustration was complete, that redemption came—4000 years after the fall: yet to Him whose understanding is infinite, to God, the only wise, this was “the fulness of time.” Gal. iv. 4.

To understand how the dispensation of man's redemption was given gradually, the following view may be taken of the Old and New Testament.

I. The books of the Old Testament record the preparation made for the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ as our Saviour.

II. The books of the New Testament present to us our

^q Psalm xvii. 15.

Hos. xiii. 14.

Dan. xii. 1—3.

^r 2 Tim. i. 10.

1 Cor. xv.

Phil. iii. 21.

^s 1 Cor. ii. 9, 10.

^t Job xxi. 30.

Psalm ix. 17.

Dan. xii. 2.

Jude 14, 15.

^u Matt. xiii. 41; xxv. 41—46.

Mark ix. 43—48.

^v Rom. ii. 8, 9.

2 Thess. i. 8.

Heb. x. 29.

2 Pet. iii. 7, &c.

Rev. vi. 17; xiv. 11.

^w Rom. i. 18.

Blessed Lord in our nature ; actually come ; purchasing that salvation ; through the Holy Spirit unfolding its whole plan ; illustrating its effects on mankind when thus unfolded ; and, by prophecy, continuing the history of those effects to the consummation of all things.

I. The books of the Old Testament record the preparation made for the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ as our Saviour.—The manner in which it pleased God to make this preparation for the coming of our Lord was chiefly by *type* and *prophecy*.

A type has been defined to be an action or occurrence, in which one event, person, or circumstance, is intended to represent another, similar to it in certain respects, but of more importance, and generally future. The Scriptures describe a type as “a shadow of good things to come^x.” Shadows are not exact resemblances, but give only a dark outline ; yet with sufficient distinctness to convey some general idea of the body, especially when afterwards we have the body with which to compare them. One distinction between a prophecy and a type is, that a prophecy is a prediction by something said—a type, usually by something done and presented to our sight.

The first revelation to fallen man contained, as has been already hinted, a prophetic declaration of mercy, which was an outline of the whole plan ; or it may be compared to a seed, which contains within itself the elements of the future plant.

The first recorded act of acceptable worship after the fall was connected with a type ; expressing by an action what the first prophecy had declared by words.

The first prophecy, that “the seed of the woman should bruise the serpent’s head^y,” intimated that the Messiah should triumph, though not without suffering to Himself. Abel’s sacrifice of a lamb seems to have shadowed forth that which was the great purpose of the Messiah’s coming—the putting away sin by the sacrifice of Himself—the substitution of an innocent for a guilty being. We can scarcely suppose that the act of approaching God by slaying an innocent animal could have been suggested to any pious mind, as in itself an acceptable mode of worship ;

^x Heb. x. 1. Col. ii. 17.

^y Gen. iii. 15.

but it is immediately seen how, as a Divine appointment in reference to the Messiah, it was suited to impress on sinful man that the wages of sin was death—that more than repentance was necessary to forgiveness—that “without shedding of blood is no remission^z,” while from the impossibility of the blood of a lamb taking away sin, such a mode of sacrifice was calculated to direct the offerer to look forward to the sacrifice of that Lamb whose merits alone could give value to such an offering. And we know from Heb. xi. 4, that “by faith Abel offered unto God a more excellent sacrifice than Cain, by which he obtained witness that he was righteous, God testifying of his gifts.” Referring the reader to Archbishop Magee on the Atonement, for a fuller notice of this subject, we may remark in his words, that “Sacrifice appears to have been ordained as a standing memorial of the death introduced by sin, and of that death which was to be suffered by the Redeemer.” (Vol. i. page 55.)

But while the first prophecy and the first type may be said to have contained the elements of revealed religion, (connecting, as Archbishop Magee suggests, in one view the two great cardinal events in the history of man, the fall, and the recovery of his nature,) the great truths hid under these mysteries were gradually brought more and more to light by other prophecies and other types.

From Gen. iii. to Exod. xx., containing the history of the world from the time of Adam to that of Moses—a period of about 2500 years—we find but few prophecies and types. During this period the people of God were under what is called the *Patriarchal Dispensation*.

By the word *Patriarch* is meant the head of a family, who, in those early ages, was the supreme governor of it both in civil and in religious matters. Such were Adam, Seth, Enos, Enoch, Noah, before the Flood; Job, Melchizedek, Abraham, Isaac, Jacob, and his twelve sons, after the Flood.

By the word *Dispensation* is here meant some particular way in which God deals with his creatures.

The expression therefore of the *Patriarchal Dispensation* signifies, that during this period God carried on the pre-

^z Heb. ix. 22.

paration for the coming of the Messiah as the Saviour of the world by means of these individuals, who, in the midst of a wicked world, constituted his Church. These became the guardians of prophecy: and their history, as well as worship, was in some respects typical; as may be shown in the cases of Enoch^a, Noah^b, Melchizedek^c, and Job^d, but more particularly in those of Abraham, Isaac, Jacob, Judah, and Joseph^e. It is observable, that in the Patriarchal dispensation may be traced the dawn of the Mosaic. This appears in reference to that great rite of sacrifice which was the distinguishing characteristic of both. In the solemn covenant which God made with Abraham, every animal is mentioned, which is commanded or allowed to be sacrificed under the Mosaic law^f. And even in the time of Noah a distinction was made of clean and unclean animals in reference to sacrifice^g; while the intention of sacrifice, as a means of turning away God's anger, is evidently implied in God's command to Job respecting his friends^h, and in the domestic practice of Job himselfⁱ.

But in the covenant made through Moses with the Jewish people, about 1500 years before the coming of our Blessed Lord—called the *Mosaic Dispensation*—the intention of animal sacrifice was more distinctly explained, many other types were instituted—typical persons, places, and things. See Lev. i. 4; vi. 2—7; xvi. 21; xvii. 11. The Jewish people were formed into a typical nation, both by their religious institutions and their history. See 1 Cor. x.; and the whole Epistle to the Hebrews. Prophecies, also, were increased both in number and clearness; among the most remarkable were those of Balaam and Moses. See Numb. xxiv. 17, and compare Deut. xviii. 15, with Acts iii. 22, 23.

Between the times of Samuel and Malachi^j, a period of about 600 years, a succession of prophets were sent who gradually unfolded with more distinctness than Moses had done, the person and office of the Messiah, and the great

^a Jude 14.

^b 1 Pet. iii. 20, 21. Gen. viii. 20.

^c Heb. v. vii.

^d Job xix. 25.

^e Gen. xii. 3, &c.; xxvi. 4; xlix. 10, &c.

^f Gen. xv. 9.

^g Gen. viii. 20.

^h Job xlii. 7, 8.

ⁱ Job i. 5.

^j Acts iii. 24.

doctrines of the Gospel. They “searched what, or what manner of time, the Spirit of Christ which was in them did signify, when it testified beforehand the sufferings of Christ, and the glory that should follow^k ;” and, in particular, they foretold the outpouring of the Spirit upon the Church, as the fruit of Christ’s ascension^l. By their writings a large accession was made to the Holy Scriptures ; and their prophecies, together with the Jews who possessed them, were scattered throughout all parts of the world. See Acts ii. 8—11.

By these means, chiefly, the impression of the coming of the Messiah was preserved from age to age. As the prophecies accumulated, this impression was deepened and extended beyond the pale of God’s peculiar people ; and such was the result, that we have the testimony of two heathen historians, Suetonius (Life of Vespasian) and Tacitus (Hist., book v. § 13), to the fact, that at the time of our Blessed Lord’s appearing there was a general expectation, not only among the Jews, but throughout the East, that some Great Person was about to come into the world. See Hag. ii. 7.

Thus the Old Testament prepared for the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ as a Saviour. And these types and prophecies, after having cherished for thousands of years the expectation of the world’s deliverance, gave evidence by their fulfilment that our Lord was the promised Deliverer.

II. The books of the New Testament present to us our Blessed Lord in our nature ; actually come ; purchasing that salvation ; by the outpouring of the Holy Spirit unfolding its whole plan ; illustrating, by facts, its effects on mankind when thus unfolded ; and, through prophecy, continuing the history of those effects to the consummation of all things.

1. In the *Gospels* is the account of our Blessed Lord proving by miracles that He was the promised Saviour, touching, in his discourses, on all the great doctrines of salvation, and purchasing that salvation by his obedience unto death.

2. In the *Acts of the Apostles* are facts illustrating the

^k 1 Pet. i. 11.

^l Psalm lxxviii. 18. Acts ii. 33. Joel ii. 28.

effects of the preaching of that salvation, when more fully revealed and applied by the Holy Spirit, and showing the establishment of the Christian Church, which united Jew and Gentile on one foundation of the Apostles and Prophets, Jesus Christ Himself being the chief corner-stone.

3. In the *Epistles* the doctrines taught by our Lord and his Apostles are developed, enforced, and vindicated against objections.

4. In the *Revelation of St. John* the work of prophecy is continued; and as in the Acts are seen the effects of that salvation in the establishment of the Christian Church, so in this book is traced its progress till the consummation of all things.

Thus is the Christian dispensation presented to us as "the master-piece of the Divine Providence; that point in which all the lines of God's manifold wisdom meet, as in their centre^m." See Eph. iii. 10.

What a view this subject gives us of the harmony of the several parts of the Bible with each other, especially of the doctrines of the Bible with its facts! The great doctrine of the Bible, as has been already noticed, is the atonement made by the Son of God for the sins of the world. And is not the preparation made in the Old Testament for his coming, answerable to so great an object? Are we not prepared in some measure, by the types and prophecies announcing the Messiah in the Old Testament, for the coming of no less a person than He who is declared in the New Testament to be "God manifest in the flesh?"

"For what manner of person must He be who shall answer all the expectation raised from age to age of his appearance? How powerful must the seed of the woman be who shall bruise the serpent's head, the ancient deceiver of mankind! How happy this seed of Abraham, in whom all the families of the earth shall be blessed! How wonderful the Prophet who shall perfect and complete the law given at Mount Sinai, and ordained by angels! How mighty the Prince who shall sit on the throne of David for ever, and of whose kingdom there shall be no end! How majestic the Angel of the Covenant, of whose coming to the temple such things were spoken! The temple built and

^m Lowth's Directions for Reading the Scriptures.

adorned by Solomon was still richer in heavenly gifts, when the precious stones of Aaron's breastplate shone with an oracular brightness, and a cloud, the symbol of the Divine presence, overshadowed the mercy-seat. Yet we are assured that the glory of the latter house, though destitute of these, shall be greater than that of the former. Who, then, is He whose presence shall thus ennoble this temple? Who is this King of Glory, who shall enter into our gates with all the honours upon Him which Heaven before divided among its favoured sons; whom Adam represented as the Father of mankind; Melchizedek, as a Priest of the most high God; Moses, as a Mediator between God and man; Joseph, as a Saviour; David, as a Shepherd of his people, a Ruler, and a King? Who can this King of Glory be—promised to all ages—proclaimed by all inspired prophets—prefigured by all great examples? who, but the Lord, even the Lord of Hosts Himself; Emmanuel, or God with us?"—Townson.

And such He is declared to be. See Matt. i. 23.

"How then shall we escape, if we neglect so great salvation?" Heb. ii. 3.

CHAPTER IV.

ON THE INTERPRETATION OF THE BIBLE.

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IN this chapter, as in every other part of the work, hints are all that can be offered—hints, the effects of which, it is hoped, may be to awaken inquiry; to make the reader feel

how vast the subject is, and, therefore, with what humility and diligence he must apply himself to the study of God's Word, searching "as for hid treasures." Prov. ii. 1—6.

§ i. *On the terms used in speaking of God.*

As the foundation of all right knowledge in religion, and therefore of all right conduct, is laid in just views of God, some remarks are necessary on the interpretation of the passages of Scripture which speak of God.

I. Let it be deeply impressed upon the mind, that from the Scriptures, and the Scriptures alone, we derive just views of God; that, as the design of all Scripture is to make us wise unto salvation, it gives us such a view of God as is adapted to that object and no other; that the Scriptures pursue this object in a manner suited to the capacities of mankind at large.

Condescending to the feebleness of our conceptions, they give, because we are not capable of higher views, such representations of God as are borrowed chiefly from ourselves, from our nature and manner of acting. For instance,—

Jer. vii. 13.—"I spake unto you, rising up early and speaking:" a figure of speech, signifying that God had done this as a matter of great importance in which He was much interested; because persons usually rise early to prosecute such business as they are earnestly engaged in.

Gen. viii. 21.—God is said to "smell a sweet savour." St. Paul uses the same metaphor. "We are unto God a sweet savour of Christ in them that are saved, and in them that perish^a." This is nothing but a Hebrew phrase, drawn from the law of sacrifices, and here employed to express God's acceptance of the services of his sincere worshippers.

When the Scriptures speak of God, they sometimes ascribe hands, eyes, and feet to Him—not that He has any of these members, for "God is a spirit;" but the meaning is, that He has a power to execute all those acts to the effecting of which these parts in us are instrumental. So

^a 2 Cor. ii. 15.

we read of "the arm of the Lord," to express his power, because in man power is chiefly shown by the arm.

Hab. i. 13.—"Thou art of purer eyes than to behold evil, and canst not look on iniquity." "That is, the holy and pure nature of God is at the greatest distance from evil, and at the greatest contrariety to it. He is so far from having any inclination to evil, that it is the only thing in the world to which He has an irreconcilable antipathy. As when men hate a thing to the highest degree, they turn away their eyes and cannot endure to look upon it. Light and darkness are not more opposite to one another than the holy nature of God is to sin." Ps. v. 4. 2 Cor. vi. 14, 15.—Abp. Tillotson.

Again, the Scriptures, borrowing illustrations and comparisons from ourselves, speak of God as having human affections and feelings.

Zeph. iii. 17.—"The Lord thy God, &c. will joy over thee with singing;" that is, will show his love and joy in the most affectionate manner; the expression being borrowed from the manner in which men show love towards their dearest relatives.

Gen. vi. 6.—"It repented the Lord that he had made man," &c.; "it grieved him," &c. When men repent of having made any thing, they no longer find pleasure in it. Thus God would teach us how displeasing and unprofitable to Him his creatures become when they commit sin. But we must not be led by such expressions to think that any thing happened which God had not anticipated; "known unto God are all his works from the beginning." Acts xv. 18. See also Prov. xvi. 4.

Again: the Scriptures say, "God doeth according to his will," &c.^b: and "Hath not the potter power over the clay^c?" God would impress on us, by this view of Himself, the most entire submission, and a complete acquiescence of mind in what He does either to ourselves or to others. But we are not for one moment to think that God acts as men usually do when they can do as they will, i.e. capriciously and arbitrarily. Every act of God is the result of the combined exercise of all the attributes of his nature—infinite wisdom, justice, goodness. "His tender mercies are over all his works." Ps. cxlv. 9.

^b Dan. iv. 35.

^c Rom. ix. 21.

So, again, Gen. xviii. 21, "I will go down and see," &c. In this passage, God speaks after the manner of men, using the language of a good judge, who never passes sentence, much less executes it, till he has examined the cause.

God is often said in Scripture to *do* those things which He determines to *permit*, and which He foresees will be, in fact, the consequence of those circumstances in which his creatures are placed, though their wills are laid under no restraint.—See 2 Sam. xii. 11, 12; xxiv. 1. 1 Kings xxii. 23. Matt. xi. 25.

In the Book of Exodus, God is said to have hardened Pharaoh's heart; that is, God permitted those temptations which, from the corrupt state of Pharaoh's heart, did harden it. "The hardness of clay, no less than the softness of wax, is ascribed to the sun; yet the sun's producing this effect is entirely owing to the qualities of the object on which he shines." Thus it is with the temptations which God permits. Abraham's temptation confirmed his faith; Pharaoh's, his impiety. Gen. xxii. Exod. iv. 21; ix. 12.

II. The utmost care must be taken not to set one view of God's character in opposition to another, but to view the different representations of it as calling us to distinct duties—submission, confidence, fear, love, &c.—all necessary to the perfection of the Christian character. Is the Saviour infinite in mercy? He is also a just God, and a Saviour perfectly holy. Compare 1 John iv. 8, with Heb. xii. 29.

III. "Let us not expect to have the like information concerning the Divine conduct as concerning our duty." Butler's Analogy, Part II. chap. v., latter part.

For instance: ask not why God permitted sin to enter the world; but, rather ask what you, as a sinner, must do to escape from its consequences. (Rom. xi. 33. Micah vi. 8. 2 Pet. i. 2, 3. John iii. 14—18. Luke xi. 9—13.)

"Dangerous it were for the feeble brain of man to wade far into the doings of the Most High: whom, although to know be life, and joy to make mention of his name, yet our soundest knowledge is to know that we know Him not as indeed He is, neither can know Him; and our safest eloquence concerning Him is our silence, when we confess, without confession, that his glory is inexplicable, his

greatness above our capacity and reach. He is above, and we upon earth; therefore it becometh our words to be wary and few.”—Hooker, Ec. Pol., Book i. Sect. 2.

§ ii. *On the instruction to be derived from the examples of Scripture.*

One of the most important means by which the Scriptures instruct us, is the example of others. But some caution is necessary in the application. For instance:—

I. The cases may not be parallel.

2 Kings ix. 31.—“Had Zimri peace who slew his master?” said Jezebel to Jehu; inferring from this, that success could not attend his enterprise; but Jehu had a Divine warrant, Zimri had not: and it may here be remarked, that an express command from God alters the whole nature of the case and of the action; as in the instances of Abraham offering up his son, and Joshua destroying the Canaanites. (See Butler’s Analogy, Part II. chap. iii.)

II. On some points of duty there was not that clear revelation of God’s will under the patriarchal and Mosaic dispensations that there is under the Gospel. This, while it gives a greater eminence to the piety of some of the Old Testament saints, accounts in a measure for the failure of duty in others under circumstances where the same conduct in us would be much more sinful. Polygamy appears to have been one of these points.

This remark naturally suggests another.

III. The characters of persons are to be estimated by the opportunities they possessed of knowing their duty. Matt. viii. 10; xv. 28^e. The guilt of Judas was much greater than that of Pilate, as we know from our Lord’s own words: “Therefore he that delivereth me unto thee hath the greater sin;” nor can we infer from the pardon of the dying thief that we can safely defer repentance to a death-bed. Capernaum was more guilty than Sodom,

^e “Faith is to be measured from the revelation which he who believeth hath, and from the opposition which he encountereth: a little faith upon little light, and maintained against a great opposition, is a great faith: though little in itself, yet great with respect to the circumstances of him or her that believeth.”—Poole on Luke xvii. 19.

and presents a solemn warning to all who possess religious privileges, and do not improve them. Matt. xi. 23.

IV. We ought to trace every act up to its principle, and, having done so, to apply this principle to our particular circumstances.

In Gen. xxi. 9, it is stated that 'Ishmael mocked Isaac.' In Gal. iv. 29, the principle is developed. It was persecution of him that was born after the Spirit, contempt of God's promises, and mockery of true religion. The mocking of Elijah towards the priests of Baal^f was a holy rebuke of irreligion, by which he more effectually exposed the gross folly, as well as wickedness, of the idolatry of Baal. Elijah's conduct in commanding fire from heaven^g was not dictated by any revengeful feeling, but by a desire to convince a wicked prince, and an idolatrous people, that the Lord was a true God, and that He alone ought to be applied to in time of trouble. The zeal of John and James^h, on the contrary, was without knowledge, passionate, persecuting; though to them it might seem to spring from a just regard to their Lord.

V. The silence of Scripture in not condemning any particular act—as, for instance, the massacre of the people of Jabesh-Gileadⁱ, and David's deceit to Ahimelech^j—can never be construed into an approbation or even palliation of the act; for the same volume elsewhere furnishes the principles on which such actions are to be condemned, and often shows their sinfulness by recording the evil consequences which arise from them: a remark which may be applied to polygamy.

VI. Much instruction may be obtained by observing the conduct of individuals in particular cases, and by contrasting the behaviour of different persons under similar circumstances.

Take for instance:—

The boldness of Micaiah^k and Jeremiah^l; the faithfulness of John the Baptist^m, constantly speaking the truth, boldly rebuking vice, and patiently suffering for the truth's

^f 1 Kings xviii. 27.

^g 2 Kings i.

^h Luke ix. 54.

ⁱ Judges xxi. 10.

^j 1 Sam. xxi. 1—10.

^k 1 Kings xxii. 14.

^l Jer. xxvi. 12—15.

^m Matt. xiv. 4.

sake: the weeping of Elishaⁿ; of the Psalmist^o; of Jeremiah^p; of Paul^q; of our Lord^r; from which we learn, that the wickedness of the ungodly should be a cause of grief and pity; the disobedience of Saul in sparing Agag the king of the Amalekites^s, and that of Ahab in sparing Benhadad^t. The consequences in the two latter cases were remarkable; an Amalekite robbed Saul of his crown, and it was in battle with Benhadad that Ahab was killed.

Again, contrast

The conduct of Saul under reproof with that of Eli:

The malice of Saul against his successor David^u, with the kindness of Eli towards his successor Samuel^v:

The refusal of Peter^w, Paul, and Barnabas^x, with the readiness of Herod^y, to accept Divine honours:

The humility of John the Baptist^z, with the self-conceit of Simon Magus^a, "giving out that he was some great one:"

The feelings of Ahaz^b when invaded by Rezin and Pekah, with those of his son Hezekiah when invaded by Sennacherib^c:

The anger of Jeroboam^d and Uzziah^e when reproved, with the submission and increased diligence of Jehoshaphat^f:

The impatience of Moses^g, Elijah^h, Jobⁱ, and Jonah^j, who prayed that they might die, with the willingness of Paul to live and suffer^k:

And, lastly, the repentance of Judas^l with that of Peter^m. The one was worldly, the other was godly, sorrowⁿ; love to Christ caused Peter to weep; remorse of conscience drove Judas to suicide.

ⁿ 2 Kings viii. 11.

^o Psalm cxix. 136.

^p Jer. ix. 1.

^q Phil. iii. 16.

^r Luke xix. 41.

^s 1 Sam. xv. 3. 8. 19.

^t 1 Kings xx. 34.

^u 1 Sam. xix.

^v 1 Sam. iii. 16, &c.

^w Acts x. 26.

^x Acts xiv. 15.

^y Acts xii. 22, 23.

^z John i. 19-27.

^a Acts viii. 9.

^b Isaiah vii. 2.

^c 2 Chron. xxxii. 7, 8.

^d 1 Kings xiii. 4.

^e 2 Chron. xxvi. 19.

^f 2 Chron. xix. 2. 4, &c.

^g Numb. xi. 15.

^h 1 Kings xix. 4.

ⁱ Job vi. 8, &c.

^j Jonah iv. 8.

^k Phil. i. 24.

^l Matt. xxvii. 3-5.

^m Matt. xxvi. 75.

ⁿ 2 Cor. vii. 10.

The different effects of a good and a bad conscience under the same outward circumstances appear by contrasting the conduct of Joseph's brethren^o with that of Paul and Silas^p, when cast into prison. Compare also Isa. lvii. 20, 21, with 2 Cor. i. 12.

By thus examining and contrasting the different conduct of different individuals, as given in the Holy Scriptures, we are able to obtain a better knowledge of human nature, and of our own hearts and duties. "In particulars," as Locke remarks, "our knowledge begins, and so spreads itself by degrees to generals;" and a knowledge of what will probably be the effects of particular circumstances on ourselves, is to be attained by a study of what has been usually the conduct of others under these circumstances. Our duty, however, is to be estimated by the light we enjoy. Is our light greater? so are our responsibilities. Heb. x. 28, 29.

§ iii. *On the Interpretation of the Doctrines of Scripture.*

I. To ascertain whether you rightly understand any doctrine, compare the inferences you will draw from it with those drawn in Scripture.

For instance: the Scriptures declare that repentance^q, faith^r, and obedience^s, are gifts of God: that it is God that worketh in us to will^t; and that without Christ we can do nothing^u.

Do we infer that it is therefore needless to exhort men to repentance, faith, and obedience? The Scriptures abound with such exhortations^v. Observe, for instance, St. Peter's exhortation to Simon Magus^w, and his address to the murderers of our Lord^x. The guilt of not repenting is charged entirely upon men^y. As we are required to believe^z, so unbelief is declared to be a sin and the cause of condemnation^a. To prepare the heart to serve God is also commanded

^o Gen. xlii. 21.

^p Acts xvi. 25.

^q Acts v. 31.

^r Eph. ii. 8.

Phil. i. 29.

^s 1 Pet. i. 2.

Eph. ii. 10.

^t Phil. ii. 13.

^u John xv. 5.

^v Mark i. 15.

^w Acts viii. 22.

^x Acts iii. 19.

^y Matt. xi. 20, 21.

Rev. ii. 21, 22.

^z 1 John iii. 23.

^a John iii. 18; xvi. 9.

as a duty ; not to do so, is to do evil, because men labour under no other inability than disinclination. Contrast the conduct of Jehoshaphat^b with that of Rehoboam^c; and observe Samuel's exhortation to the Israelites^d.

Again, the Scriptures declare, that we are justified freely by grace, and not by works^e.

Do we thence infer that justification by faith alone weakens the obligation to good works? The Scriptures throughout insist on the necessity of good works, and draw from this very doctrine the strongest motives to obedience. See Rom. xii. 1.

II. Particularly observe the practical object with which every doctrine of Scripture is introduced, the duty to which it calls us, and the motive it supplies for the discharge of it. Doctrines are the great motives to duty; and frequently the most mysterious are made the groundwork of the most practical exhortations. The latter chapters of the Epistles to the Romans and Ephesians will illustrate this.

Again, very awful views are given in Scripture of the power of the devil; for instance, that he is "the god of this world^f," and "the prince of the power of the air^g." See also John xii. 31; Matt. xiii. 19; Eph. vi. 12; Luke viii. 30; Rev. xii. 9. But the great practical object of these views should ever be kept in mind; namely, to lead us to a higher sense of the value of the work of Christ^h; to excite us to greater watchfulness and prayerⁱ; and to purify our character by the brighter exercise of our graces; and St. Paul says, that lest he should be exalted, *i. e.* to preserve him from pride, a messenger of Satan was sent to buffet him. 2 Cor. xii. 7. 9.

In the fifth chapter of the Epistle to the Romans, we find the clearest declarations of that awful and deeply mysterious fact, that, through the offence of one, judgment has come upon all men to condemnation. In the same chapter we are also told why this was revealed, viz.

^b 2 Chron. xix. 3.

^c 2 Chron. xii. 14.

^d 1 Sam. vii. 3.

^e Rom. iii. 23, 24. 27.

^f 2 Cor. iv. 4.

^g Eph. ii. 2.

^h 1 John iii. 8.

Luke xxii. 32.

ⁱ Eph. iv. 27; vi. 11—18.

2 Cor. xi. 3.

1 Pet. v. 8, 9.

James iv. 7.

to magnify the grace of God in our redemption by Christ. Rom. v. 15—20.

The Deity, Incarnation, and Atonement of Christ, are urged, not only as the foundation of all our hopes, but as the strongest motives even to those duties which we owe to our fellow-creatures.

The practical exhortation, "In lowliness of mind let each esteem other better than themselves," is founded on the doctrine of Christ's condescension: "Let this mind be in you, which was also in Christ Jesus, who, being in the form of God, thought it not robbery to be equal with God, but made himself of no reputation," &c. Phil. ii. 3—7.

The doctrine that "God loved us, and sent his Son to be the propitiation for our sins," is urged as an argument why we should love one another: "Beloved, if God so loved us, we ought also to love one another." 1 John iv. 10, 11.

The same doctrine is also urged as an argument for a forgiving spirit^j, for benevolence to the poor^k, and for the fulfilment of the duties of a husband and wife^l.

The doctrine that our bodies are the temples of the Holy Ghost, which is in us, is urged as a dissuasive from fornication. 1 Cor. vi. 19.

So, also, the doctrine of the Trinity is presented to us, not only as the foundation of our faith, as appears from its close connexion with the rite of baptism^m, but as assuring us of the ceaseless supply of all blessingsⁿ. The Scriptures present this doctrine to us as a revelation of God, adapted to our state as sinners, and calculated to lead us to Himself, and to make us humble and holy. Eph. ii. 11—28.

Is it not therefore true, that *he who slights the doctrines of Christianity undermines its morality?*

§ iv. *On the Interpretation of the Promises of Scripture.*

I. "We must receive God's promises in such wise as they be generally set forth to us in Holy Scripture." Art. XVII. of the Church of England.

^j Eph. iv. 32.

^k 2 Cor. viii. 9.

^l Eph. v. 25.

^m Matt. xxviii. 19.

ⁿ 2 Cor. xiii. 14.

For instance; while it says, "No man can come unto me, except the Father which hath sent me draw him^o," it says also, "Him that cometh unto me, I will in no wise cast out^p." Our Lord has also promised that his "heavenly Father will give his Holy Spirit to them that ask him^q."

"The secret will of God, let us be assured, is no contradiction of his revealed will; it is no reserve upon it, tending to frustrate and nullify its purport." J. Scott.

"We cannot dishonour the goodness and veracity of God more than to suppose He mocks men by his promises, and makes a show and offer of a benefit, when He really intends none; for all his ways are faithfulness and truth." Tillotson.

"All the promises of God are, in Christ, yea and amen^r;" that is, they are absolutely certain on the ground of his merits for whose sake alone they are given and fulfilled.

II. In the interpretation of promises relating to this life, the following considerations are important. They shall be fulfilled so far as they are conducive to our eternal welfare. That is good for us which is good for our souls. Matt. vi. 33; xvi. 26.

Also in the interpretation of temporal promises in the Old Testament, some limitation is necessary in their application to Christians, from the peculiarity of that dispensation, where life and immortality not having been brought to light, temporal blessings were more directly appointed to express God's favour, and to be shadows of good things to come. Take as an instance the promise of protection in the ninety-first Psalm; "Thou shalt not be afraid for any terror by night; nor for the arrow that flieth by day," &c.

III. The promises of Scripture are to be considered as motives to prayer and exertion.

Though Nathan had told David that his sin was forgiven, yet David prays earnestly to be delivered from blood-guiltiness. Psalm li. 14.

David makes God's promise to establish his house, a motive to plead with God to do as He had said. 2 Sam. vii. 16—25.

^o John vi. 44.

^p John vi. 37.

^q Luke xi. 13.

^r 2 Cor. i. 20.

In Ezek. xviii. 31, God says, "Make you a new heart;" in Ezek. xxxvi. 26, "A new heart will I give you;" adding in the 37th verse, "I will yet for this be enquired of."

In Jer. iv. 14, the command is, "Wash thine heart from wickedness;" in Jer. xxxi. 31—33, the writing of God's law in the heart of man is declared to be the great promise of the new covenant. Heb. viii. 10—13.

God had said, "I will send rain upon the earth^s," yet Elijah must pray, and with great earnestness and perseverance, for what God had promised. 1 Kings xviii. 42—44.

When Daniel knew the seventy years' captivity was expiring, then he set his face to seek by prayer its promised accomplishment. Dan. ix. 2, 3.

When our Lord had promised the gift of the Holy Spirit^t, the disciples continued in prayer and supplication till the fulfilment of the promise. Acts i. 14.

It was no distrust of God which led Paul, though he had a direct promise from God that he should see Rome, still to use all the means in his power for the preservation of his life; as, for instance, when he heard of a conspiracy to assassinate him at Jerusalem. Acts xxiii. 11—17, &c. In his shipwreck, though he had assured the crew^u, as God had promised, that there should be no loss of life among them, yet there was no inconsistency in his afterwards saying, "Except these abide in the ship ye cannot be saved^v," because he knew that, in the fulfilment of God's promises, the means are ordained to the end.

IV. Promises made to individuals may often be applied generally. Thus the application to the Hebrew Christians which St. Paul has made of God's promises to Joshua, "I will not fail thee, nor forsake thee^w," is very important, as showing that God's promises to particular persons are recorded in Scripture for the encouragement of God's people in every age. Heb. xiii. 5.

To prevent, however, the misapplication of these or of any other promises of Scripture to yourself, examine yourself, as to whether you are of that character to which the particular promise is made. Do you desire Abraham's

^s 1 Kings xviii. 1.

^t Acts i. 4.

^u Acts xxvii. 22.

^v Acts xxvii. 31.

^w Josh. i. 5.

blessing? walk in the steps of Abraham's faith^x. Do you wish to be remembered with the favour which God bears to his people? seek that poor and contrite spirit with which the High and Lofty One, that inhabiteth eternity, hath promised to dwell^y. When Nehemiah prayed to God for mercy and forgiveness, and pleaded the promises which had been made to Moses^z, he did not forget that such promises had only been made to those who should "turn to God, and keep his commandments and do them." Neh. i. 5—11; see also 1 Chron. xxviii. 9; Ezek. xxxiii. 13; James i. 5—7.

V. The Scriptures represent God as delighting in mercy; not willing that any should perish, but that all should come to repentance. Micah vii. 18—20; 2 Pet. iii. 9; 1 Tim. ii. 4. They speak of God's promises as exceeding great and precious; and the grandeur of the hopes which they set before us should fill our hearts with gratitude, and inspire the greatest earnestness after the attainment of that holiness of which it is their special object to make us partakers. 2 Pet. i. 4; 2 Cor. vii. 1; Ps. lxxxiv. 11, 12; Matt. xi. 28—30; Rev. iii. 20, 21; Heb. iv. 14—16.

§ v. *On the Interpretation of the Threatenings of Scripture.*

The following threatenings were given absolutely, *i. e.* no condition was expressed; but evidently from the result a condition was implied.

Judges x. 13.—God said to the children of Israel, "I will deliver you no more:" yet He did deliver them. Judges x. 16. Compare also Numb. xiv. 12. 20.

1 Kings xxi. 21, 22.—Ahab was threatened that during his lifetime, all his posterity should be destroyed; and again, that in the place where dogs licked Naboth's blood, should dogs lick his^a; but though no condition was expressed, yet this sentence was altered: for neither of these threatenings was fully executed. 1 Kings xxi. 29.

Jonah iii. 4.—"Yet forty days and Nineveh shall be overthrown:" it stood for more than eighty years after this.

^x Rom. iv. 3. 12.

Heb. iv. 1.

^y Isaiah lvii. 15; lxvi. 1, 2.

^z Deut. iv. 25—31.

^a 1 Kings xxi. 19.

Isa. xxxviii. 1.—“Set thine house in order, for thou shalt die, and not live.” Hezekiah lived for fifteen years after this. Isa. xxxviii. 5.

A general rule is given for the interpretation of God's threatenings, as applying both to nations and individuals, in the two following passages :

Jer. xviii. 7, 8.—“At what instant I shall speak concerning a nation, &c., to destroy it, if that nation turn from their evil, I will repent of the evil,” &c.

Ezek. xxxiii. 14, 15.—“When I say to the wicked, Thou shalt die, if he turn, &c., he shall not die.”

From which, as Bishop Sanderson remarks, it is clear that God's threatenings have ever a condition annexed to them in God's purpose, whether that condition be expressed or not.

It is an act of mercy in God to threaten; his threatenings against Nineveh^b and against the Church at Ephesus^c, remarkably illustrate the intention of such threatenings; which is, that we may avoid the evils which are threatened. Yet, the present state of Nineveh, and that of the Church at Ephesus, no less remarkably illustrate, that, “Verily, he is a God that judgeth in the earth^d.” He that wept over Jerusalem^e at length destroyed it; He that died for sinners, is coming in flaming fire to take vengeance on them that know not God, and obey not the Gospel. 2 Thess. i. 8.

§ vi. *On the Interpretation of the Precepts of Scripture.*

To comprehend the full extent of the Ten Commandments, remarks Archbishop Secker, it will be requisite to observe the following rules:—

I. When any sin is forbidden in them, the opposite duty is intended to be enjoined; and when any duty is enjoined, the opposite is forbidden.

II. When the highest degree of any thing evil is prohibited, whatever is faulty in the same kind, though in a

^b Jonah iii. 4.

^c Rev. ii. 5.

^d Psalm lviii. 11.

^e Luke xix. 41.

lower degree, is prohibited. This is illustrated by our Lord's interpretation of the sixth and seventh commandments. Matt. v. 22. 28.

III. Where one instance of virtuous behaviour is commanded, every one that hath the same nature and the same reason for it is understood to be commanded also. The command, "Honour thy father," &c., includes the duty of paying respect to all superiors—as magistrates, masters, &c.

IV. When we are expected to abstain from any sin, we are expected to avoid, as far as we can, all temptations to it and occasions of it: and when we are expected to practise any virtues, we are expected to use all fit means that may better enable us to practise it.

V. All that we are bound to do ourselves, we are bound, on fitting occasions, to exhort and assist others to do, when it belongs to them; and all that we are bound not to do, we are to tempt nobody else to do, but keep them back from it as we have opportunity.

A distinction may be made between moral and positive precepts. "Moral precepts," says Bishop Butler, "are precepts, the reasons of which we see; positive precepts are precepts, the reasons of which we do not see. Moral duties arise out of the nature of the case itself; positive duties do not arise out of the nature of the case, but from external command." Though, however, positive duties do not arise out of the nature of the case itself, yet when once they have been commanded, it is our bounden duty to perform them. Abana and Pharpar, rivers of Damascus, might in themselves be better than all the waters of Israel, but after the command given, it was Naaman's duty to wash in Jordan^f. There was no virtue in the brazen serpent to heal the bitten Israelite^g; in the blood upon the door-post to save their first-born^h; in the cruse of salt to cure the bitter watersⁱ; in the bunch of figs to recover Hezekiah^j; but the command having been given to use them, the blessing could not be expected in any other way.

^f 2 Kings v. 10.

^g Numb. xxi. 9.

Wisdom xvi. 6, 7.

^h Exod. xii. 7, 13.

ⁱ 2 Kings ii. 20—22.

^j 2 Kings xx. 7, 8.

It must be remembered, therefore, that things otherwise indifferent become very important when made the subject of prohibition or command.

Abraham and the Patriarchs worshipped in groves^k, and it was not sinful: but after the command had been given, "Thou shalt not plant thee a grove of any trees near unto the altar of the Lord thy God^l," it would have been very sinful to do so. Before the coming of Christ, it was written of the uncircumcised child, "that soul shall be cut off from his people^m;" but after his coming, it was no longer binding on the Jews; and to the Galatians, who had shown a disposition to trust in it, St. Paul writes, "If ye be circumcised, Christ shall profit you nothingⁿ," &c. Thus, whether to set apart one day, or any particular day or days, in six, or in seven, or in eight, as a Sabbath, might appear unimportant had there been no express command, but the command having fixed the duty to one day in seven, it becomes a matter of great moment. The same remark applies to the sacraments of Baptism and the Lord's Supper. Our Lord having enjoined the use of baptism^o and the commemoration of his death till He come again, and having promised to impart grace through those ordinances, the abuse or neglect of them becomes very dangerous.

For further remarks on positive institutions, see Butler's Analogy, Pt. II. ch. i.

§ vii. *On the Interpretation of Prophecy.*

The language of prophecy is very figurative: some remarks therefore on the subject of FIGURES may form a proper introduction to this section.

Figures abound in every language; but in scarcely any book are they to be found so frequently as in Scripture. Our Lord often spoke figuratively^p, and the figures He used were sometimes misunderstood, as by Nicodemus^q,

^k Gen. xxi. 33.

^l Deut. xvi. 21.

^m Gen. xvii. 14.

ⁿ Gal. v. 2.

^o Matt. xxviii. 19.

John iii. 5.

^p Matt. xxiv. 29.

^q John iii. 4.

by the Samaritan woman^r, and even by his own apostles^s.

A figure may often be explained by showing upon what grounds the name of one thing is used to denote another. Thus, "Instead of the thorn shall come up the fir-tree; and instead of the brier shall come up the myrtle-tree^t:" by the thorn and the brier are meant the wicked; by the fir-tree and myrtle are meant the just. This, then, is the meaning, when the idea intended to be conveyed by these figures is expressed in language not figurative, "Instead of the wicked shall arise the just, and instead of sinners such as fear to sin." The thorn and the brier are used to denote the wicked, because they are useless and injurious; while, on the contrary, the fir-tree and myrtle being fragrant, useful, ornamental, may properly represent the just, whose influence is so pleasant and beneficial.

The following remarks will in some measure illustrate the figurative language adopted by the Prophets, as founded on the principle of resemblance.

That which is grand in nature, is adopted to express that which is dignified and important among men.

The sun, moon, stars, mountains, hills, and stately trees, denote kingdoms, or those in great authority, as kings, &c.: see Isa. ii. 13—16; where fortresses, ships, high trees, and lofty mountains, are taken metaphorically, and where ships of Tarshish represent rich merchants.

Political revolutions are represented by great convulsions in nature; as earthquakes, removal of islands and mountains, the drying up of rivers, the blackening of the sun, the falling of stars, the turning of the moon or of seas and rivers into blood. Thus in Jer. iv. 23—28, we have a passage which gives, by the use of figurative language, a most pathetic and awful view of the approaching desolations of Judah by Nebuchadnezzar. See Isaiah xiii. 10. 13, which is a most sublime prophecy of the destruction of Babylon. The figurative expressions employed in Matt. xxiv. 29, and Acts ii. 19, refer to the destruction of Jerusalem by the Romans.

Those things which have a fertilizing and refreshing

^r John iv. 11—15.

^t Isaiah lv. 13.

^s Matt. xvi. 6—11. John ii. 22; iv. 32, 33.

power, such as dew, gentle showers, running waters, streams, fountains, &c., are employed to represent spiritual blessings, thus, "I will be as the dew to Israel^u:" *i. e.* by bestowing upon them the Holy Spirit, to refresh and strengthen their souls. See also John iv. 13, 14; vii. 37—39; and Isa. xxxv. 6.

The different qualities of animals are also used figuratively; birds and beasts of prey are emblems of tyrants.

The rising and breaking of a horn refers to the rise and dissolution of a state. Daniel makes frequent use of this figure. (See chap. viii.) A horn of salvation signifies a mighty salvation, the power of the animal being much exerted by the horn. See Luke i. 69.

Light and darkness express joy and sorrow, prosperity and adversity, knowledge and ignorance, holiness and sin. Esther viii. 16. Isa. v. 20; viii. 20. Ps. xcvii. 11. Rom. xiii. 12. Eph. v. 14.

The occupations and relations of life furnish many figures. A vineyard denotes a Church—if with broken enclosures, a corrupt Church; if bearing sour or wild grapes, an unfruitful Church. Isa. v. 1—7.

Marriage is used to denote our covenant with God; adultery, our departure from God by idolatry. Jeremiah and Hosea make a bold use of this figure.

Nations are frequently described in prophetic language by those parts of them which are nearest the Holy Land. Thus the passage, "The daughter of Tyre shall be there, with a gift^v," is prophetic of the accession of the Gentiles to the Church, because Tyre was a city in the neighbourhood of Palestine, and formerly the glory of nations and mart of the world. The prophecy in Isa. lx. 6 (referring to countries next Judea eastward), denotes the accession of the Eastern world, as the one in verse 9 (describing the ships of Tarshish) that of the Western world, to the Church of God.

Many figures are borrowed from the religious services of the Jews. Thus the conversion of Egypt to the Gospel is foretold under the expressions of an altar being set up and sacrifices offered to the Lord^w. Again, alluding to the Gospel times, when the Gentiles shall be converted, it is

^u Hos. xiv. 5.^v Psalm xlv. 12.^w Isaiah xix. 19—21.

said, "In every place incense shall be offered^x," that is, devout prayer. The service of God under the Gospel is intended, when the prophet speaks of going up to Jerusalem, and keeping the feast of Tabernacles there^y.

The remark, that the prophets use such expressions with relation to the Gospel times as are taken from the usages of their own, is a good rule for explaining the idioms of the prophetic writings; it being common in the prophetic style to speak of future times in the language and according to the ideas of the present; and of the spiritual worship of God, by the known terms of the worship then used. W. Lowth, Bp. Chandler.

Again: in figurative language a day is reckoned for a year: thus the number of days during which Ezekiel lay on his side was to represent the number of the years of the iniquity of the Jewish people. For God said, "I have appointed thee each day for a year^z." Again: Dan. vii. 25; xii. 7, the expression "time, times, and half a time," is intended to express three prophetic years and a half. Three prophetic years and a half are 1260 prophetic days; and 1260 prophetic days mean 1260 common years, reckoning a day for a year; referring to the period assigned for the reign and fall of Antichrist.

These illustrations of the figurative language of prophecy may be sufficient to introduce the subject. Those who would inform themselves thoroughly on it, should consult Lowth on the Hebrew Poetry, Horne's Introduction to the Study of the Bible.

With regard to prophecy itself, one important point to be observed is, that an event is often spoken of as done before it has taken place, probably to denote the certainty of its accomplishment: thus the exclamation of Isaiah, "*Jerusalem is a desolation: our holy and our beautiful house where our fathers praised thee is burnt up with fire^a*," alludes to Nebuchadnezzar's destruction of the city and temple, which did not take place till 100 years after Isaiah wrote this. So also the words, "*He is despised and rejected of men^b*," and "*He made his grave with the wicked^c*,"

^x Mal. i. 11.

^y Zech. xiv. 16.

^z Ezek. iv. 6.

^a Isaiah lxiv. 10, 11.

^b Isaiah liii. 3.

^c Isaiah liii. 9.

are prophetic of events in the life of our Blessed Lord which happened 700 years afterwards. But one day is with the Lord as a thousand years, and a thousand years as one day ; so that what He brings to pass on the day He declares his purpose, is not more certain than what He will bring to pass a thousand years after his declaration. —Acts xv. 18 ; Ps. xc. 4 ; 2 Pet. iii. 8 ; Isa. xiv. 24.

The prophets are sometimes said to do things when they declare God's purpose of doing them, as in Jer. i. 10 ; Ezek. xliii. 3.

Prophecies have sometimes a partial and more immediate, and a complete and more remote accomplishment. Thus, Isa. vi. 10, "Make the heart of this people fat," &c. This prophecy might relate in some measure to the state of the Jews before the Babylonish captivity ; but it did not receive its full completion till the days of the Saviour : and in this sense it is understood and applied by the writers of the New Testament (John xii. 40 ; Acts xxviii. 27), and by our Saviour Himself. Matt. xiii. 14, 15. Bishop Newton.

In the midst of the mention of particular mercies promised to, or of judgments denounced against, the people of God, the prophets sometimes break forth into sublime predictions concerning the Messiah ; see Isa. vii. 14. "These digressions appear exceedingly abrupt and incoherent" (remarks Boyle) "to those who do not consider how seasonable the mention of Christ may be in connexion with that of the mercies of God (of which He is the foundation and pinnacle, the ground and consummation), and with the threatenings of the judgments of God, in which He was his people's grand consolation."

As to *fulfilled* prophecy ; what was stated at pages 25—35, may be sufficient to show the importance of comparing together the different prophecies which foretel the same event, and these again with the historical account of their fulfilment, particularly the various prophecies respecting our Blessed Lord (such as those given at page 36), with the four Gospels and the Acts.

On the interpretation of *unfulfilled* prophecy, the following remark of Sir Isaac Newton, on the Revelation of St. John, is very important.

"The folly of interpreters has been, to foretel times and

things by the prophecy, as if God designed to make them prophets. He gave this and the prophecies of the Old Testament, not to gratify men's curiosity, by enabling them to foreknow things, but that, after they were fulfilled, they might be interpreted by the event; and his own providence, not the interpreter's, be then manifested thereby to the world."

The following passages may in some measure illustrate this. "And now I have told you before it come to pass, that, when it is come to pass, ye might believe^d." "When therefore he was risen from the dead, his disciples remembered that he had said this unto them, and they believed the Scripture, and the word which Jesus had said^e." So also, when they had witnessed his zeal in purifying the Temple, his disciples remembered that it was written, "The zeal of thine house hath eaten me up^f." And it may be remarked, that the greater part of the prophecies relating to the Messiah were obscure, in order that the event might be the key to open and illustrate them. Indeed, the obscurity of the allusion strengthens the evidence of its Divine appointment, as being more free from suspicion. For how could any man attempt to forward its accomplishment, when he could not understand what was intended, till the event explained it?

A striking illustration how the obscurity and apparent contradiction of unfulfilled prophecy is removed by the event, is seen in comparing the prophecies of Jeremiah and Ezekiel respecting Zedekiah. Jeremiah foretold that Zedekiah should behold the king of Babylon and go to Babylon^g: Ezekiel foretold that Zedekiah should not see Babylon^h. Zedekiah, as we are informed by Josephus, thinking these prophecies contradictory, believed neither. But both were exactly fulfilled. Zedekiah did see the king of Babylon, not at Babylon, but at Riblah, whence, his eyes being put out, he was carried to Babylon and died there.

The evil of seeking in our own way to bring about the accomplishment of unfulfilled prophecy, is seen in the consequences of the deceit of Rebekah and Jacobⁱ, and

^d John xiv. 29.

^e John ii. 22.

^f John ii. 17.

^g Jer. xxxiv. 3.

^h Ezek. xii. 13.

ⁱ Gen. xxvii. 35. 41, &c.

also in the iniquity of Hazael^l. The *precepts*, not the *purposes*, of God must ever be the rule of our conduct: as Josiah, though assured by Huldah of the certainty of the destruction to come upon Jerusalem^k, did not in the least relax the energy of his efforts to reform it^l, acting in the spirit of that important distinction, that “duty is ours: events are God’s.”

§ viii. *On the Interpretation of Types.*

From the illustrations which, in the Epistles to the Galatians^m and the Hebrewsⁿ, St. Paul has given with respect to the typical nature of the Patriarchal and Mosaic dispensations, and particularly of the services of the Jewish ritual^o, we have reason to think that there are many more types in the Old Testament than are distinctly referred to, as such, in the New Testament. The sacrifice of Isaac, for instance, is not distinctly referred to in the New Testament as a type of Christ, but, as Abp. Secker remarks, it should be received in the resemblance which it hath to that of Christ.

In both cases we see a good and kind Father causing his beloved, only, and innocent Son to suffer death. Isaac was heir to the promises of the temporal Canaan: through Christ we claim the inheritance of the heavenly. Isaac carried the wood on which he was bound, in order to be offered up; Christ carried the cross on which he was afterwards nailed and put to death. The place where God appointed the former should die, and the place where the latter actually died, were both in the land of Moriah (that is, of God manifested), on one of the mountains of which the temple stood; on another our Saviour’s cross. The term of three days, too, is remarkably specified in each history. The *Lamb* which Abraham said “God would provide,” naturally turns our thoughts to Him, whom the Baptist calls *the Lamb of God*; and the ram, substituted for Isaac, to the temple-sacrifices of animals, types of the atonement of Christ. Then lastly, the mountain, where provision was made for Abraham’s distress, deserved its

j 2 Kings viii. 13. 15.

k 2 Kings xxii. 16.

l 2 Kings xxiii.

2 Chron. xxxiv. xxxv.

m Gal. iv. 22—31.

n Heb. v. 10; vii. 1.

o Heb. viii. 5; ix. 1, &c.; x. 1, &c.

name of Jehovah-Jireh infinitely better, on account of God's providing there for the redemption of mankind.

Notwithstanding, however, the evident types, which may thus sometimes be traced, yet from the danger of abuse in the application of this principle, perhaps it may be generally safer (especially in teaching the young) to dwell only on those for which we have Scriptural authority.

To constitute one thing the type of another (remarks Bishop Marsh), something more is wanted than mere resemblance. The former must not only resemble the latter, but it must have been designed to resemble it in its original constitution.

Again, in a type every circumstance is far from being typical: for instance, the High Priest, on the day of atonement, was eminently a type of Christ^p; but we cannot infer from the High Priest offering first for his own sin, that therefore Christ partook of our sinful nature. The contrary is the fact, that in Him was no sin. (See Beausobre's Introduction to the Holy Scriptures.)

To us the great importance of types is, that we can look back upon a regular connected series of revelations, originating at the creation of the world, and delivered in sundry ways, and by divers instruments, and at various times—so that it was impossible to suppose any human concert—and yet uniting to prefigure the advent of that Saviour in whom we trust.

It may also be added, that types are important, not merely as predictions, but as helping to illustrate the nature and offices of Christ. Nor is it sufficient to be persuaded, in a general way, that such and such persons and events are typical of Christ: we wish also to know in what particular circumstances and respects they are typical of Him. Thus the paschal lamb shadowed forth not only the sacrifice of the death of Christ and the benefits which we receive thereby, but also his person; the lamb being an emblem of the Saviour's humility, meekness, and holiness. Matt. xi. 29; Isa. liii. 7; 1 Pet. i. 19.

§ ix. *On the Interpretation of Parables.*

The word *parable* properly means *comparison*. In Scrip-

^p Heb. ix. 7, &c.

ture it is used in many different senses, but most frequently in this. Parables generally draw a comparison, and point out a likeness between supposed and actual occurrences, or more frequently between natural and spiritual things. They may be either anecdotes of real though in themselves unimportant occurrences, or stories framed for the particular purpose.

The first mentioned in the Bible is that which Jotham addressed to the men of Shechem ^q. Nathan made use of a parable in order to rebuke David ^r; and applied it by saying, "Thou art the man." Parables were occasionally employed by the prophets; and very frequently by our Lord.

In endeavouring to draw from them the intended instruction, the following rules and considerations may be useful:—

I. Guard against fanciful interpretations.

For instance: the parable of the good Samaritan was obviously intended to illustrate the second great commandment of the Law, "Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself." But it sometimes has been thus perverted. The good Samaritan has been said to mean our Blessed Lord; the half-dead and wounded traveller, Adam and his sinful race; the Priest and Levite, the moral and ceremonial Law; the oil and wine, pardon and sanctification; the two-pence, the two ordinances of Baptism and the Lord's Supper; the inn, the Church; the landlord, a pious minister of the Gospel, &c.

Such modes of interpretation (as has been well remarked) are a dangerous departure from the simplicity of the Gospel. They have the effect of producing a disrelish for the pure milk of the word, exciting a morbid longing for what is ingenious rather than what is true. While fancy is amused, and self-conceit gratified, the practical instruction really intended is overlooked, and principles of interpretation sanctioned, which not only tend to make Scripture ridiculous in the eyes of the world, but shake the foundation of all truth; giving the impression that the Scriptures have no definite meaning; making of any thing, as Hooker says, what it pleases, and bringing, in the end, all truth to nothing. (Eccles. Polity, Book v. c. 59.)

^q Judges ix. 7—15.

^r 2 Sam. xii. 1—4.

II. Never attempt to prove any point of doctrine or duty from single phrases or incidental circumstances.

From the circumstance of the rich man addressing Abraham^s, to infer the propriety of prayers to glorified saints is altogether unwarrantable. Throughout the whole of this awful parable, which sets before us in so striking a manner the danger of worldliness and of the neglect of duty, the state after death is described by images borrowed from the present life, and from the objects of our senses; because by these means only can such subjects be brought down to our understanding. For instance, the expression that Lazarus was in Abraham's bosom, refers to the Jewish mode of reclining at feasts. Three or more persons lay on one couch; and the place of chief honour was that of the guest who lay in such a manner that he might repose his head on the bosom of the master of the feast. It was thus that St. John, at the last Supper, "was leaning on Jesus' bosom^t." The mention, therefore, of this fact in the parable of which we are speaking, is intended to imply that Lazarus was received to a place of peculiar honour.

It sometimes happens that a parable contains circumstances which contribute to the general design of a speaker only so far as the drapery in a picture contributes to the general object of the painter. We must be careful, therefore, not to make a doctrinal application of circumstances which were only introduced in order to fill up the body of the narrative, or to give it ornament and variety. For instance, in the parable of the wicked husbandmen, it is said, "They will reverence my son^u." No one for one moment imagines this to imply, that God was ignorant of the actual reception which his Son would meet with from the Jews.

Matt. xxv. 1.—We cannot infer from the parable of the ten virgins, that because five are represented as wise and five foolish, half of those who make a profession of religion will finally be saved, and half finally perish.

Luke xv. 4.—In the parable of the lost sheep, only one

^s Luke xvi. 24.

^t John xiii. 23.

^u Matt. xxi. 37.

in one hundred went astray; in that of the ten pieces of silver, the proportion lost was one in ten: evidently showing that too much stress is not to be laid on every circumstance of a parable: otherwise the Bible may soon be made to contradict itself.

III. Consider carefully the design of the speaker. 1 Kings xxii. 19—23.—Micaiah's speech is parabolical; and several of the circumstances which are thrown into it are, in a great measure, ornamental, and designed only to illustrate the narrative. They are not, therefore, to be taken in a literal sense, but in such a manner as other parables are, where the design of the speaker is chiefly to be considered; which in Micaiah's case was—to show that God justly punishes wicked men, when they obstinately refuse to hear Him, permitting them to be deceived by the evil one to their own destruction. 2 Thess. ii. 11, 12.

Our Lord's design in the parable of the ten virgins is declared by Him in Matt. xxv. 13; and his design in the parable of the lost sheep, the lost piece of money, and the prodigal son, may easily be inferred from the occasion which introduced them. See Luke xv. 2.

Chrysostom remarks, "We ought not to lay too much stress upon single words and phrases; when we have learnt the scope and design of the parable, we need not be anxious about any thing but the moral or useful instruction principally intended thereby."

Luke xv. 11.—In the parable of the prodigal son we need not determine who are meant by the hired servants, or seek for any far-fetched spiritual interpretation of the ring, &c. As a part of the parable, the putting on the ring naturally expresses the prodigal's perfect restoration to the privileges of a son, and so far falls in with the general scope of the parable; but to pursue it further might be to pervert its meaning.

It has been remarked by Archbishop Tillotson, that sometimes the parable and the moral are not like two planes that touch in every point, but like a globe laid upon a plane, which touches it in one point only. For instance, when our Lord says, "Behold, I come as a thief," He only intends to convey the idea how sudden and unexpected will be his coming. Luke xii. 39, 40; Rev. iii. 3.

Luke xvi. 1.—In the parable of the unjust steward, if we do not attend to the design of our Lord, we may feel a difficulty in the fact, that He did not more pointedly condemn the man's injustice: "Hierom of old (as Poole remarks) thought this parable was very obscure; and Julian and other apostates, together with some of the heathen philosophers, took occasion from it to reproach the doctrine of Christ, as teaching and commanding acts of unrighteousness;" whereas by observing that the single point here is the *means* used for the attainment of the end, the whole difficulty vanishes: for it is evident that, in reference to the means which the unjust steward used, he showed a forethought well calculated to secure his end; and that in this single point of comparison the children of this world are in their generation wiser than the children of light; that is, they better adapt their means to their end.

IV. The sacred writers, and our Lord in his parables, sometimes argue with men on their own principles, rather than on what is true in fact.

Luke xv. 7.—The Pharisees were not really "just men who needed no repentance," but they thought themselves so.

Again: verse 25, the elder brother represents the Pharisees: but it is not true that they had served God and never transgressed his commandment; or that to them more than to others belonged the privileges of God's people: but they thought so; and upon their own principles our Blessed Lord shows how wrong was their opposition to those publicans and sinners who sought mercy at his hands. See also Luke xix. 22.

V. It is important to consider the circumstances of those to whom the parable was immediately addressed, and in what sense it is probable that they would have understood it.

Our notion of Pharisees, for instance, is that of very bad men, because the hypocrisy of their character has been so fully exposed by our Lord; but the notion a Jew had of them was just the contrary; and this must be our clue to the interpretation of the parable of the Pharisee and the publican; the design of which is to show that the only ground of justification before God, even for those whom

we may consider the best of men, is the plea of mercy: that if we trust in our righteousness, though, like the Pharisee, we acknowledge it to be the gift of God, we shall go away from his presence unforgiven. Luke xviii. 9.

VI. Some of our Lord's parables are prophetic.

That of the mustard seed^v foretels the spread of the Gospel from very small beginnings; that of the husbandmen^w the malice of the Jews in putting Christ to death, and their consequent destruction; that of the sower^x is prophetic of the various effects which the Gospel produces upon the hearts of men; that of the tares^y and that of the net^z show that there will be a mixture of good and bad in the Church till the day of judgment. Our Lord's parables frequently point to the day of judgment; and "no doubt," remarks Boyle, "other prophecies will then be discovered in them which are yet unregarded."

List of Parables in the Old Testament.

Jotham's: the trees making a king. Judges ix. 7.
 Nathan's: the poor man's ewe lamb. 2 Sam. xii. 1.
 Two brothers striving together. 2 Sam. xiv. 6.
 The prisoner that made his escape. 1 Kings xx. 39.
 The thistle and the cedar. 2 Kings xiv. 9.
 The vineyard yielding wild grapes. Isaiah v. 1.

In the Gospels.

The sower. Matt. xiii. 3; Mark iv. 3; Luke viii. 5.
 The tares. Matt. xiii. 24.
 The mustard seed. Matt. xiii. 31; Mark iv. 31; Luke xiii. 18, 19.
 The leaven. Matt. xiii. 33; Luke xiii. 20, 21.
 The hidden treasure. Matt. xiii. 44.
 The pearl of great price. Matt. xiii. 45.
 The barren fig-tree. Luke xiii. 6.
 The prodigal son. Luke xv. 11.
 The good Samaritan. Luke x. 30.
 The rich man and Lazarus. Luke xvi. 19.
 The unjust steward. Luke xvi. 1.
 The lost sheep. Matt. xviii. 12; Luke xv. 4.
 The lost piece of money. Luke xv. 8.
 The importunate widow. Luke xviii. 1.

^v Matt. xiii. 31.

^w Matt. xxi. 33.

^x Matt. xiii. 3.

^y Matt. xiii. 24.

^z Matt. xiii. 47.

The Pharisee and publican. Luke xviii. 10.
 The nobleman who went to receive a kingdom. Luke xix. 11.
 The creditor who had two debtors. Luke vii. 41.
 The vine and the branches. John xv. 1.
 The seed opening insensibly. Mark iv. 26.
 The net cast into the sea. Matt. xiii. 47.
 The unmerciful servant. Matt. xviii. 28.
 The labourers in the vineyard. Matt. xx. 1.
 The two sons sent into the vineyard. Matt. xxi. 28.
 The wicked husbandmen. Matt. xxi. 33; Mark xii. 1; Luke xx. 9.
 The invitation to the feast. Matt. xxii. 1; Luke xiv. 16.
 The man not having on the wedding-garment. Matt. xxii. 11.
 The ten virgins. Matt. xxv. 1.
 The talents. Matt. xxv. 14.
 The door and the good shepherd. John x. 1.

§ X. *On the importance of comparing Scripture with Scripture.*

The danger of quoting detached passages of Scripture, without regard to their context, or to the light which other parts of God's word may throw upon their interpretation, is seen in the fact, that the devil thus brought forward passages from Scripture in order to lead our Lord to sin. And such perversions of the word of God, as has been truly said, are among the deepest and most dangerous of his devices.

1. One important rule, therefore, in the interpretation of the Bible, is to attend to the *immediate context*; i. e. what goes before or follows a particular sentence, verse, or chapter. For instance—

John ix. 3.—“Neither hath this man sinned, nor his parents.” Rom. iii. 23. “All have sinned, and come short of the glory of God:” but the context of the former passage shows the meaning to be, that his blindness was not the punishment of any particular sin; and that therefore, neither he nor his parents had sinned in the way the Jews thought they had.

John xviii. 36.—“My kingdom is not of this world.” The charge against our Lord, when tried by the Sanhedrim, was that of blasphemy, but the only charge by which the Jews could interest Pilate, the Roman governor, was a charge of treason, an attempt on the part of our Lord to

set up a kingdom in opposition to Cæsar (see Luke xxiii. 2). In reply, then, to this charge, repeated by Pilate in his inquiry, "Art thou the king of the Jews?" our Lord says, "My kingdom is not of this world," i. e. I do not come to set up a temporal kingdom, a kingdom which can interfere with Cæsar's power; our Lord's being a spiritual kingdom over the hearts of men. Yet, in strange disregard of this, the passage has been often quoted as a Scriptural argument against ecclesiastical establishments, a subject with which the context shows it has nothing to do.

1 Kings xxii. 15.—"Go and prosper," &c.; the context shows that the very reverse of this is meant; see also 2 Kings x. 3.

Again: Numb. xxii. 20; "Rise and go" (as clearly appears from the context in verses 12 and 32), does not imply God's approbation, but the contrary; as though God had said to Balaam, If after you know what you ought to do, your heart is still set on acting contrary to it, I give you up to your own heart's lust. (See Psalm lxxxi. 12.)

John xiii. 27.—"That thou doest, do quickly," &c. This, so far from being a command to Judas, is rather an awful warning, a declaration to Judas of Christ's foreknowledge of his wickedness, and preparation for it. It was therefore peculiarly calculated to deter Judas from his purpose.

2 Sam. xvii. 14.—The Lord had determined to defeat the *good* counsel of Ahithophel. It was atrociously wicked counsel, but the context shows in what respects it might be termed good, as being the best means to accomplish the end which Absalom had in view. In the same sense (as we have before observed) the unjust steward is commended by his lord for having done wisely. Luke xvi. 1—8.

2 Sam. iv. 11.—Ish-bosheth, though in his opposition to David he acted contrary to the declared will of God*, and therefore very unrighteously, is termed by David a *righteous* person: the context explains this; he was righteous as to his murderers, having done them no injury, and having given them no provocation.

Psalm vii. 8.—"Judge me according to my righteous-

* 1 Sam. xvi. 12, 13. 2 Sam. iii. 9. 1 Sam. xxviii. 17.

ness," *i. e.* his innocency in reference to the charge which Cush, the Benjamite, brought against him. David cannot be supposed to have pleaded his righteousness towards God, for in another place he acknowledges his iniquities "to be more in number than the hairs of his head^b." In the same sense, Dan. vi. 22 is to be reconciled with ix. 4, &c. "The better men are, the greater is the sense of their guilt, and the deeper their humiliation."—Lowth.

1 Kings ii. 32.—"Who fell upon two men more righteous than he,"—referring to Abner and Amasa. But they were both, though relatively better than Joab, wicked men.

Ezek. xvi. 52.—"Thy sisters are more righteous than thou,"—referring to Sodom and Gomorrah. These cities were very depraved; but the expression is used in order to show the still deeper guilt of Judah.

Rom. iv. 5.—"To him that worketh not," &c.; *i. e.* (as appears from the context) so as to seek justification by it. In every point of view, works are necessary.

1 Cor. xi. 29.—Taken out of its connexion, the word here rendered by our translators "damnation," might be understood in too strong a sense, as applying exclusively to the eternal torments. But the context (verses 30—32) shows that it refers principally to temporal judgments, as bodily distempers, &c.; and it is material to observe, as Bishop Tomline remarks, that the word "damnation," when the Bible was translated, meant no more than condemnation: any sentence of punishment whatever, without a particular reference to the eternal torments to which the impenitently wicked will be consigned at the last day.

1 Cor. x. 33.—"I please all men in all things." And Gal. i. 10.—"If I yet pleased men, I should not be the servant of Christ." St. Paul *pleased all men*, by accommodating his dealings with them, as far as he could, to their respective circumstances, and condescending to their habits, and feelings, and prejudices; not seeking his own profit, but the profit of many, that they might be saved: with this object, to the Jew he became a Jew, &c. Again, he *did not please men*, for he did not seek to gain their favour by any such condescensions as were inconsistent with truth and duty.

^b Psalm xl. 12; xxxviii. 4.

1 Pet. v. 7.—“Casting all your care upon him,” taken apart from its context, might be abused as an encouragement to inaction, and can only be understood when taken in connexion with the next verse.

Matt. xxvi. 28.—“This is my blood,” &c. After consecration the wine is still called “the fruit of the vine” (verse 29). The passage therefore cannot be used as an argument for the Romish error of transubstantiation.

The same remark applies to 1 Cor. xi. 24, as compared with 26—28, where the Apostle after consecration calls the elements bread. This passage, as Bishop Tomline remarks, may of itself be considered as decisive against the doctrine of transubstantiation, which thus appears to be, as the 28th Article of our Church expresses it, repugnant to the plain words of Scripture.

1 John v. 20.—“This is the true God, and eternal life.” The context shows that this refers to Jesus Christ, and is an unanswerable proof of his divinity. Three times in this chapter^c, eternal life is attributed to Christ as the author and dispenser of it; and what follows also adds greatly to the force of this interpretation, being a solemn caution against the worship of any other than the true God: “Little children, keep yourselves from idols.”

The immediate connexion of a passage is sometimes interrupted,

1. By *digression* or *parenthesis*.

This is frequent in St. Paul’s writings. Thus:

Eph. iii. 1—14: verses 2—13 are a digression: the immediate connexion of verse 1 is not with verse 2, but with verse 14.

2. By *the division of chapters*^d.

Thus Isa. ix. 8 to x. 4 (Bishop Lowth remarks) is a distinct poem, having no connexion whatever with what goes before or follows. Also the subject of Isa. liii. properly begins chap. lii. 13; and chap. li. ought to include the first twelve verses of chap. lii.

^c 1 John v. 11—13. See also ch. i. 2.

^d The Scriptures were very early divided into certain sections for ecclesiastical purposes, as we learn from Justin Martyr and Clement of Alexandria. But the existing division of the Bible into chapters is the work of Hugo de St. Caro, in the 13th century. The New Testament was first divided into verses in the edition of Robert Stevens, A.D. 1551.

The first three verses of the eighth chapter of Jeremiah ought not to have been separated from those of the preceding chapter. The sixth verse of the third chapter begins a distinct prophecy, which continues to the end of the sixth chapter.

Bishops Lowth and Horsley consider Psalms xlii. and xliii. to be but one Psalm, and more than thirty MSS. confirm this opinion. Obviously the first verse of the fourth chapter of the Epistle to the Colossians ought to be joined to the third chapter; and the fourth and fifth chapters of the second Epistle to the Corinthians ought to be read together.

The subject of the seventh chapter of the second Book of Kings (the account of the siege of Samaria) is begun at the twenty-fourth verse of the sixth chapter: and the importance of attention to this appears from comparing vii. 1 with the last verse of the sixth chapter. The gracious promise of deliverance was made by Elisha in reply to the impious declaration of Jehoram, "What should I wait for the Lord any longer?"

The twenty-first and twenty-second chapters of the Acts of the Apostles are closely connected with each other.

The first verse of the seventh chapter of the second Epistle to the Corinthians should have been included in the sixth chapter, being the conclusion of the argument of the latter part of that chapter.

II. The books of Scripture, though written by different persons, and at different times, are so connected together, as parts of one system, that it is often necessary to bring together passages from various parts, before they can be properly understood.

Ps. cvi. 19.—"They made a calf in Horeb," *i.e.* as appears from Exod. xxxii., on the very spot where, and at the time when, God was taking them into covenant. "They worshipped the molten image," and that so soon after they had seen the terrible plagues inflicted on the Egyptians for their idolatry^e; and had in the most solemn manner pledged themselves to renounce it^f.

1 Kings xxii. 48.—"But the ships were broken," &c. In 2 Chron. xx. 35—37, the reason is stated; and the

^e Numb. xxxiii. 4.
Exod. xii. 12.

^f Exod. xx. 4, with xxiv. 3.

comparison of the two passages gives a practical illustration of the admonition, "If sinners entice thee, consent thou not^g;" for if we are partakers of other men's sins, we shall also receive of their plagues.

From 2 Kings ix. 26, it appears that Naboth's sons also were murdered by Jezebel. This is not recorded in 1 Kings xxi.

By comparing Isaiah vi. 1 with John xii. 41, we find that Isaiah then saw the glory of Christ.

Acts xv. 39.—Why should Barnabas so warmly espouse the cause of Mark? Col. iv. 10 tells us he was his nephew.

Matt. xi. 28, compared with John vi. 35, shows that by coming to Christ, is meant believing on Him.

Ps. cv. 37.—"There was not one feeble person among their tribes." A very remarkable fact, but not mentioned in the narrative of their departure in the twelfth chapter of Exodus.

Matt. xxvi. 27, and Mark xiv. 23.—"Drink ye *all*," "They *all* drank," &c. That this command of Christ to receive the cup of the Lord extended to the laity, and was not confined to the Apostles or priests, is proved by 1 Cor. xi. 23—28. In six different passages, the eating of the bread, and drinking of the cup, are mentioned together by the inspired Apostle: and to all Christians indifferently he gives the same charge: "Let a man examine himself, and so let him eat of that bread, and drink of that cup." 1 Cor. xi. 28.

The history of Balaam affords an illustration of the importance of comparing Scripture with Scripture. In order to obtain a complete view of his character, we must turn not only to the narrative in the Book of Numbers^h, but also to the Epistle of St. Peterⁱ, where we are informed what motive influenced him; and again to that of St. Jude, in order to see the deep hold which covetousness had upon him^j: while the Book of Revelation^k particularly draws our attention to a very remarkable fact concerning

^g Prov. i. 10.

^h Numb. xxii. xxiii. xxiv.
and xxxi.

ⁱ 2 Pet. ii. 15.

^j Jude 11.

^k Rev. ii. 14.

him, that it was at his instigation Balak threw that temptation in the way of the Israelites which caused the destruction of 23,000 of them in one day¹. See Bishop Butler's sermon on the character of Balaam.

The disregard of this rule of comparing Scripture with Scripture led the Jews to reject Jesus as the Messiah, and even to justify that rejection by an appeal to Scripture.

John xii. 34.—“We have heard out of the law that Christ abideth for ever: and how sayest thou, The Son of man must be lifted up?” That Christ was to abide for ever, they gathered from those passages of Scripture where his kingdom is represented to be everlasting: as Dan. vii. 14; Ezek. xxxvii. 25; Isa. ix. 7; and from God's promise to David, Psalm lxxxix. 36, 37. But had they also sufficiently attended, as Whitby remarks, to other passages, in which our Blessed Lord is represented as a suffering Messiah, they would have had their scruples removed, and would have readily believed what He so frequently foretold concerning Himself. See Ps. xxii. 18; xl. 6; Isa. liii. 2—12; Dan. ix. 26.

§ xi. *On the different senses in which words are used.*

Words are not always used exactly in the same sense. For instance—

I. *Blood.*

Acts xvii. 26.—“God hath made of one blood all nations of men,” *i. e.* hath created the race of man all from Adam, their first parent.

Matt. xxvii. 25.—“His blood be on us,” &c.; *i. e.* the guilt of having put Him to death.

Eph. i. 7.—“Redemption through his blood,” *i. e.* by the sacrifice of his death upon the cross where his blood was shed. This explains why, in the typical sacrifices of the Old Testament, the blood was consecrated rather than any other part of the victim. “For it is the blood that maketh an atonement.” Lev. xvii. 11. “And without shedding of blood is no remission.” Heb. ix. 22.

¹ 1 Cor. x. 8.

II. *Covenant.*

The term "Covenant" is frequently used in the Bible. We read of God entering into covenant with man; but this is in a sense differing somewhat from the covenants which men usually make with each other.

In covenants which men make with each other, as for instance Abraham and Abimelech¹, the contracting parties, remarks Beausobre, are at liberty, and have nearly the same right of proposing the conditions on which they are willing to agree and covenant together. But the case is otherwise in those which God has made with man. God is the Creator, and men his creatures: He is the supreme Monarch, and they his subjects: He is the Sovereign Law-giver, and must be obeyed absolutely and without reserve. When God, therefore, says that He makes a *covenant* with mankind, his meaning is, that out of condescension and mere goodness, He is pleased to bind Himself to the fulfilment of his promise, that He may engage them to obedience by a principle of gratitude and love.

Hence God's great covenant with fallen man, through the Lord Jesus Christ, is described as "his mercy promised to our fathers . . . Abraham," &c.^m His mercy is thus promised to us in a covenant, in order to assure us of its certainty, and to remind us of the solemnity of our obligation to holiness as partakers of such infinite mercy.

The Old and New Covenants alluded to in Jer. xxxi. 31, Gal. iv. 24, and in many other parts of the Bible, refer to the Jewish and Christian dispensations.

III. *Faith.*

1 Cor. xiii. 2.—"Though I have all faith, so that I could remove mountains;" *i. e.* such a reliance on some particular promise to that effect; evidently of a very different kind from that mentioned in Rom. v. 1.

Rom. iii. 3.—"The faith of God;" *i. e.* the faithfulness of God.

Acts xxiv. 24.—"The faith in Christ;" *i. e.* the doc-

¹ Gen. xxi. 27.

^m Luke i. 72.

trines of the Gospel generally, the distinguishing feature of which is reliance on Christ alone for salvation.

Rom. xiv. 23.—“Whatsoever is not of faith is sin.” Here faith signifies, not the belief of the Gospel, but the persuasion that what we do is lawful.

IV. *Flesh*.

Rom. vii. 5 ; viii. 8.—“They that are in the flesh cannot please God ;” *i. e.* those who are under the guidance of their corrupt nature ; yet,

Ezek. xxxvi. 26.—“A heart of flesh” means a tender, teachable temper.

Gal. iii. 3.—“Are ye now made perfect by the flesh ?” *i. e.* the outward ceremonies of the Mosaic law, particularly circumcision.

Gen. vi. 12.—“All flesh had corrupted his way ;” *i. e.* all men. So also Ps. lxxv. 2 : “O thou that hearest prayer, unto thee shall all flesh come ;” *i. e.* all mankind.

John i. 14.—“The Word was made flesh.” 1 Tim. iii. 16.—“God was manifest in the flesh ;” *i. e.* appeared in human nature.

V. *Grace*.

Grace means favour ; but in the particular application of it, it is made to refer to different subjects.

Rom. iii. 24.—“Being justified freely by his grace,” refers to God’s mercy in the pardon of sin, bestowed without any merit in us.

Tit. ii. 11.—“The grace of God that bringeth salvation hath appeared to all men,” refers to the Gospel.

2 Pet. iii. 18.—“Grow in grace.” Grace here seems to mean holiness, because holiness is the effect of God’s grace, we being his workmanship, created in Christ Jesus unto good works.

VI. *Law*.

When the writings of the Old Testament were divided into Psalms, Law, and Prophets, the *Law* included only the Pentateuch. But in John x. 34, it refers to the Jew-

ish Scriptures generally, the passage there quoted being in Ps. lxxxii. 6.

Heb. x. 1.—It refers to the covenant made with the Jews, particularly their ceremonial law.

Rom. vii. 7.—It applies to the Ten Commandments.

Isa. ii. 3.—“Out of Zion shall go forth the law;” *i. e.* the doctrine of the Gospel; because it has the nature and power of a law, obliging us to the belief and practice of it no less than the old law did.

VII. *Perfect.*

Noahⁿ, Job^o, Asa^p, and others, are spoken of as perfect; but this is not the sense in which the term is used in Heb. xii. 23. It means only that they were sincere; not as the spirits of the just in heaven, absolutely free from all sin.

Other instances may be given of words not always being used in the same sense. Thus:

Matt. xi. 25.—“At that time Jesus *answered* and said;” answering in Scripture, does not always signify replying to the words of another; any speech made upon a fit occasion is called an answer, though no remark has been previously made.

2 Kings xvii. 33.—“The Samaritans feared the Lord, and served their own gods:” that is, it was a slavish fear, arising only from a dread of punishment; not that filial fear which is described as the beginning of wisdom^q, and the effect of which is hatred of evil^r.

Heb. ix. 27.—“It is appointed to man once to die;” *i. e.* temporally. John viii. 51.—“If a man keep my saying, he shall never see death;” *i. e.* the second or eternal death.

These illustrations are sufficient to suggest caution in the interpretation of Scripture.

§ xii. *Hebraisms.*

Every language has its idioms, *i. e.* modes of expression peculiar to itself. The Old Testament having been written

ⁿ Gen. vi. 9.

^o Job i. 1.

^p 1 Kings xv. 14.

^q Job xxviii. 28.

^r Prov. viii. 13.

in Hebrew, the peculiar idioms of that language are frequently found in our English translation. These are called Hebraisms. The New Testament also contains Hebraisms, because, though originally written in Greek, it was written by Jews; and they, therefore, occasionally conveyed their ideas by expressions peculiar to their native language.

Of the Hebraisms in the Holy Scriptures the following may be noticed.

1. It is an idiom of the Hebrew language to call the effect, or the object, or any thing that belongs to another, the son or child of it.

1 Sam. i. 16.—Hannah pleads with Eli not to account her a daughter of Belial.

1 Sam. xxv. 17.—Nabal is called a son of Belial.

1 Sam. ii. 12.—Eli's sons are called sons of Belial.

Belial is a Hebrew word, implying a wicked, worthless person; and, therefore, a son or daughter of Belial implies a wicked person.

Luke x. 6.—“Son of peace,” means a pious, unprejudiced person, disposed to receive the blessings of the Gospel.

John xvii. 12.—Judas is called the “son of perdition,” *i. e.* one worthy of perdition. See also Matt. xxiii. 15; 2 Thess. ii. 3.

Eph. ii. 3.—“Were by nature children of wrath;” “children of wrath” means “liable to, or worthy of wrath.”

Eph. v. 6—8.—“Children of disobedience,” of “light,” mean respectively “disobedient,” “enlightened” persons.

2. As the Jews have but few adjectives in their language, they supply their place with substantives.

1 Thess. i. 3.—“Your work of faith, and labour of love, and patience of hope.” All these expressions are Hebraisms for active faith, laborious love, and patient hope, and might very properly be so translated.

Eph. i. 13.—“Ye were sealed with that Holy Spirit of promise,” *i. e.* with the promised Spirit.

Col. ii. 8.—“Philosophy and vain deceit,” means “a deceitful and vain philosophy.”

3. It is a common Hebraism to denote the greatness

or excellence of a thing by employing the words, "of God," or "of the Lord." Thus,

Acts vii. 20.—The expression "exceeding beautiful," is literally "fair to God." See margin.

Ps. lxxx. 10.—"Goodly cedars," are "cedars of God."

Jonah iii. 3.—"An exceeding great city," is "a great city of God."

4. The highest Hebrew superlative was formed by doubling the word.

2 Cor. iv. 17.—"Weight of glory." The Hebrew word answering to *glory*, signifies both weight and glory.

Eph. i. 19.—"According to the working of his mighty power;" literally it is, "according to the energy of the strength of his force." Here strength and force, two words of the same signification, are joined to heighten the style.

5. "To be found," "to be called," often mean among the Hebrews, "to be;" of which Matt. i. 18 is an undoubted example; for it was Joseph's ignorance of Mary's miraculous conception which led him to think of putting her away.

Compare Heb. xi. 5, with Gen. v. 24, "Enoch was not found." "Enoch was not."

Phil. ii. 8.—"Being found in fashion as a man," *i. e.* being.

Isa. ix. 6.—"His name shall be called Wonderful," *i. e.* He shall be wonderful, &c.; i. 26.—"Jerusalem shall be called," *i. e.* shall be "the city of righteousness."

6. "Loving and hating," in the Hebrew language, is often only an emphatic mode to express choosing one thing or person and leaving another; or preferring one before another. Our Saviour thus uses this Hebraism, John xii. 25, compared with Matt. x. 39.

Luke xiv. 26.—It is said, "If any man come to me, and hate not his father," &c. Our clue to the meaning of this is in Matt. x. 37, where our Lord says, "Whoso loveth father or mother more than me."

Rom. ix. 13.—"Jacob have I loved, but Esau have I hated," *i. e.* I have preferred Jacob to Esau.

7. It is a Hebraism to express things in an imperative

and active form which are to be understood only permissively.—Abp. Tillotson. Thus 1 Kings xxii. 22: "Go forth, and do so," implies only a permission, not a command.

Isa. vi. 10.—"Make the heart of this people fat," is a statement of the fact as to what would be the consequence, when God withdrew his restraining grace, and left them to themselves.

8. Gen. iii. 5.—"Knowing good and evil," is a Hebrew phrase for a very enlarged knowledge, as in 2 Sam. xiv. 17 with 20. On the contrary, to know or to speak neither good nor evil, is to know or to speak nothing at all. Deut. i. 39; Gen. xxxi. 29.

§ xiii. *Importance of attending to Proper Names.*

1. The same persons or places sometimes have several names.

Moses' father-in-law is called in different places Raguel, Reuel, and Jethro.

Joshua is twice in the New Testament called Jesus^s. Nahash^t is the same as Jesse^u, the father of David: hence we find that Joab and Amasa were near relatives to David and to each other. We are thus better able to understand many circumstances in their history, and more fully to see the guilt of Joab in the assassination of Amasa. 2 Sam. xx. 10.

Mark ii. 14.—"And as he passed by, he saw Levi," &c.; this is the same person as Matthew. Thaddeus, Lebbeus, and Judas, are all different names for the Apostle St. Jude.

Horeb and Sinai are often spoken of indiscriminately, being different peaks of one and the same range of mountains. Deut. v. 2; Exod. xix. 18—23.

The Sea of Tiberias is the same as the Lake of Genesareth, or, as it was more anciently called, Cinnereth. Numb. xxxiv. 11; Josh. xii. 3; xix. 35.

Edom and Idumea are the same.

^s Acts vii. 45.
Heb. iv. 8.

^t 2 Sam. xvii. 25.
^u 1 Chron. ii. 13—16.

Greece, or Grecia, was known by the name of Javan among the Hebrews. In our English Bibles, Javan is sometimes used, as in Isa. lxvi. 19; Ezek. xxvii. 13; and sometimes the modern name, Greece, as in Zech. ix. 13; Dan. viii. 21; Joel iii. 6: Javan was the fourth son of Japheth. Gen. x. 2.

2. Different persons and places have sometimes the same name.

Ephraim, in Gen. xlviii. 5, refers to a person; in Judges i. 29, to a tribe; in Jer. xxxi. 18, to the Ten Tribes of Israel; in John xi. 54, to a city.

Amaziah was the name, not only of an idolatrous king of Judah (2 Chron. xxv.), but of an idolatrous priest of Bethel, who accused Amos to Jeroboam of conspiring the death of the king. Amos vii. 10, 11.

Among the kings of Judah and Israel there were several of the same name. (See Table, p. 245.)

There were several Zachariahs: (1) Zachariah, the fourth in descent from Jehu, who reigned just long enough to fulfil God's promise to Jehu. 2 Kings xv. 8, and x. 30. (2) Zechariah, a prophet basely murdered by Joash, who had been redeemed from destruction by his father. 2 Chron. xxiv. 20—22. (3) Zechariah the prophet, whose writings form part of the Bible, and who was raised up to encourage the Jews to rebuild the temple. Ezra v. 1. (4) Zacharias (which is the same name with Zachariah), the father of John the Baptist. Luke i. 59, 60.

There were several Herods: (1) Herod, infamous for his attempt to murder our Blessed Lord in his infancy, but called in profane history the Great. (See Luke xvi. 15.) (2) Herod Antipas, his son—inquisitive about the truth without loving it^v, crafty^w, incestuous^x, superstitious^y, the murderer of John the Baptist^z, and the mocker of our Blessed Lord in his last sufferings^a. (3) Herod Agrippa, nephew of Herod Antipas, and grandson of Herod the Great, the murderer of the Apostle James, and eaten of worms for his pride. Acts xii. 1—3. 20—23.

^v Mark vi. 20.
Luke xxiii. 8.

^w Luke xiii. 32.

^x Matt. xiv. 3.

^y Mark vi. 16.

^z Matt. xiv. 1—10.

^a Luke xxiii. 11.

So there are some names which appear to have been common to several successive kings of a country. Thus we read of Pharaoh king of Egypt, who reproved Abraham for his sin^b; of Pharaoh, who commended Joseph, and made him ruler over Egypt^c; of Pharaoh, who, in attempting the destruction of the people of God, was himself destroyed^d; of Pharaoh, whose daughter Solomon married^e; of Pharaoh Nechoh, who slew Josiah^f; of Pharaoh Hophra (or Apries) his successor, denounced by Jeremiah^g and Ezekiel^h, for his arrogance, impiety, and treachery. Pharaoh probably means *father of the country*, and was the name of all the kings of Egypt till the Babylonish Captivity, and perhaps longer; as Ptolemy was their name after the time of Alexander.—(Bp. Patrick.) Abimelechⁱ, which means *my father the king*, was a name common to the kings of the Philistines. Benhadad was a name common to the Syrian kings. Three Benhadads are mentioned in the Books of Kings^j. Jabin was a common name of the kings of Canaan, as evidently the Jabin mentioned in the Book of Joshua^k was not the Jabin mentioned in the Book of Judges^l; Agag was the name of the kings of the Amalekites^m; and Artaxerxes, of the Persians. The Roman emperors all took the names of Cæsar and Augustus. The Augustus mentioned in Luke ii. 1, was the second emperor of Rome. The Cæsar who was reigning when our Lord was crucified, was Tiberius. John xix. 15. The emperor to whom St. Paul appealed, and who is called both Augustus and Cæsar, was Nero. Acts xxv. 21.

The Antioch mentioned in Acts xiii. 1, and the Antioch mentioned in 2 Tim. iii. 11, were different places; the one was in Syria, the other in Pisidia.

There were two Bethlehemsⁿ. There were, at least, two Cæsareas, viz. Cæsarea Philippi^o, near the springhead

^b Gen. xii. 18.

^c Gen. xli. 38—45.

^d Exod. xiv. 28.

^e 1 Kings iii. 1.

^f 2 Kings xxiii. 29.

^g Jer. xlv. 30.

^h Ezek. xxix. 2, &c.

ⁱ Gen. xx. 2; xxvi. 8.

^j 1 Kings xv. 18.

2 Kings viii. 7.

2 Kings xiii. 3.

^k Josh. xi. 1; xii. 19.

^l Judges iv. 2.

^m Numb. xxiv. 7.

1 Sam. xv. 8.

ⁿ Josh. xix. 15.

^o Acts viii. 40.

of Jordan, about 30 miles to the north of the sea of Galilee, and Cæsarea on the sea-coast of Samaria, where Philip the evangelist lived^p, where Peter converted Cornelius^q, where Paul defended himself against the Jews^r, and where Herod Antipas was smitten by an angel^s. There were also several Mizpehs—Mizpeh in Judah, where Samuel dwelt^t; Mizpeh in Gilead, where Jephthah dwelt^u; and Mizpeh of Moab, where David's conduct was a bright example of filial piety. 1 Sam. xxii. 3.

3. Scripture names have often a very significant meaning. Thus :

Achan, "*he that troubleth*;" thus his name becomes an epitome of his history, which awfully displays the folly and guilt of covetousness. Josh. vii.

Adam, *earthly*, or *red earth*. Gen. ii. 7.

Abraham, *father of a great multitude*; Gen. xvii. 5; a prophecy wonderfully fulfilled with regard to both his natural and spiritual seed. Gal. iii. 29.

Alleluia, *praise the Lord*; the song of heaven to the Redeemer's glory. Rev. xix. 1.

Baal, the name of the Phœnician idol, and Bel, the name of the Babylonish idol, both mean *Lord*.

Beer, *a well*. Numb. xxi. 16. Beerlahairoi, *the well of him that liveth and seeth me*; Hagar's memorial of God's compassion to her. Gen. xvi. 14.

Edom, *red*; a brand put on Esau's profaneness in selling his birthright for a mess of red pottage. Gen. xxv. 30.

Ebenezer, *the stone of help* raised by Samuel. 1 Sam. vii. 12.

Israel, *a prince with God*; a name given to Jacob as an encouragement to us to persevere in prayer, as the name Israelites, given to his people, was to remind them of what should be their distinguishing character. Gen. xxxii. 28.

Judah, *praise the Lord*; directing us to him as the ancestor of the promised Messiah. Gen. xlix. 10.

Jubilee, *sounding of the trumpet*; the year of Jubilee being proclaimed by a trumpet. Lev. xxv. 9.

^p Acts xxi. 8.

^q Acts x. 1.

^r Acts xxiv.; xxxiii. 33.

^s Acts xii. 23.

^t 1 Sam. vii. 5, 6.

^u Judges xi. 34.

Melchizedek, *king of righteousness*: remarkably showing how much Christ is kept in view in the historical parts of the Old Testament. Gen. xiv. 18; Heb. vii. 2.

Messiah (the same as Christ), *anointed*. 1 Sam. ii. 10; Dan. ix. 25; Acts x. 38.

Moses, *taken out of the water*; a constant memorial of the goodness of God's providence to him. Exod. ii. 10.

Noah, *rest*; a suitable name for him, to whom God gave the promise that the ground should not again be cursed for man's sake, and through whom was preserved that promise of the Messiah, in whom alone the soul of man can find rest.

Phylactery, *a preservative*. Matt. xxiii. 5. The word is derived from the Greek, and was originally applied to certain charms which the Pagans carried about with them, to preserve them from evil, disease, danger, &c. The Jewish phylacteries were little rolls of parchment, in which were written certain words of the law. These they wore on their foreheads, and on the wrist of the left arm. The passages written on them were Exod. xiii. 2—10, 11—16; Deut. vi. 4—9; xi. 13—21. The superstition of wearing them arose from a perversion of Exod. xiii. 9. 16. (Bishop Patrick, Calmet.)

Salem, *peace*.

Samuel, *asked of the Lord*; peculiarly descriptive of the fact, 1 Sam. i. 20; and it is very observable that he, whose name was intended as a memorial of God's goodness in answering prayer, was in his life distinguished as a man of prayer. Ps. xcix. 6.

Solomon, *peaceable*. 1 Chron. xxii. 9.

Teraphim, *images*; referring to idolatrous worship, and thus throwing light on that remarkable prophecy of Hosea respecting the present state of the Jews, who have been bitter enemies of truth, as seen in their continued rejection of Christianity, and who have yet been restrained from idolatry, to which they were formerly so prone. See Hos. iii. 4.

Tophet, *a drum*; the name of a place near Jerusalem where children were burnt as offerings to Moloch, and drums beat to drown their cries.

Urim and Thummim, *light and perfection*; indicating

the clearness with which God would impart to the High Priest the knowledge of his will, when that knowledge was sought by means which He had appointed. See Exod. xxviii. 30.

To these may be added the names of the captives in Babylon. Dan. i. 6, 7.

Daniel, *God is my judge.*

Hananiah, *the grace of the Lord.*

Mishael, *he that is the strong God.*

Azariah, *the Lord is a help.* These were the names given to these three men at their circumcision, when taken into covenant with the God of Israel. But the names Belteshazzar, Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego, by which their conqueror and patron sought to ennoble them, seem to have been intended as a snare to them to renounce their religion, and forget the God of their fathers.

Belteshazzar means *the keeper of the hid treasures of Bel*, the great Babylonish idol.

Shadrach means *the inspiration of the Sun*, which the Chaldeans worshipped.

Meshach probably refers to *the goddess Shach*, under which name Venus was worshipped.

Abednego, *the servant of the shining fire*, which they worshipped also.

As Daniel, Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego, are among the most illustrious examples on record of men unhurt by prosperity, and enabled to overcome one of the strongest temptations, that of the fear of man, a temptation by which Abraham^v, Isaac^w, David^x, and Peter^y, were overcome, these significations of their names are not to be overlooked. Luke xiv. 26; Heb. xi. 33, 34; 1 John v. 4, 5.

Those names which begin or end with EL, or begin with JE, or end with IAH, were generally designed to express some relation to God; as Bethel, *the house of God*.

The names which God thought fit to give of Himself

^v Gen. xii. 11—13; xx. 2—11.

^w Gen. xxvi. 7.

^x 1 Sam. xxvii. 1.

^y Matt. xxvi. 69—74.

Gal. ii. 11, 12.

were descriptive of his attributes. Exod. iii. 14; vi. 3; xxxiii. 18—20; xxxiv. 5—7; Rev. xxi. 6.

Parents or ancestors are put for their posterity. Thus, Gen. ix. 25, "cursed be Canaan," *i. e.* his posterity; God foreseeing their wickedness, which began in their father Ham. The curse did not affect individuals, or even nations, so long as they continued righteous, for Melchizedek and Abimelech appear to have been both Canaanites. Gen. xiv. 18—20; xx. 6; see also Gen. xv. 16; and see also Matt. xv. 22. 28.

Jacob and Israel are often put for the Israelites, as in Exod. v. 2; Numb. xxiii. 21; xxiv. 5. 17; Deut. xxxiii. 28; 1 Kings xviii. 17, 18; Ps. xiv. 7; cxxxv. 4.

§ xiv. *Value of some knowledge of Geography.*

Geography principally refers to the relative situation of places.

I. The first thing we may notice, is the peculiarity of some geographical terms as used in the Scriptures.

The Hebrews (as Mr. Mede observes) use the word "Isles" to signify all those countries divided from them by sea; or sometimes any region, country, or province. Isa. xi. 10, 11; xl. 15; Jer. ii. 10; Job xxii. 30; Isa. xx. 6.

Lesser Asia and Europe, peopled by the descendants of Japheth, are called the Isles of the Gentiles. Gen. x. 5.

The term *coasts* does not always apply to land bordering on the sea—thus "in all the coasts," Matt. ii. 16, means in all the parts. In another passage, "coasts" refers to the inland countries belonging to the cities of Tyre and Sidon. Matt. xv. 21.

Paul was forbidden to preach in Asia, yet he immediately essayed to go into Bithynia. Acts xvi. 7. Without a knowledge of the peculiarity of some of the geographical terms of Scripture, we might be ready to charge him with an act of disobedience, for Bithynia was not only in what we call Asia, but in Asia Minor. "Asia," however, throughout the Acts of the Apostles and the Epistles of Paul, so far from being what we understand by the term,

does not mean the whole of Asia Minor, or Anatolia, but a particular district, of which Ephesus was the capital. Acts ii. 9; 1 Cor. xvi. 19; Rev. i. 4.

Ever since the Grecian monarchy prevailed over so great a part of the world, the Jews called all the civilized part of mankind, except themselves, *Greeks*. (See Acts xix. 10; xx. 21; Rom. i. 16; ii. 9, 10, margin; x. 12.) This explains why she, who is called by Matthew a woman of Canaan, *i. e.* one of the old stock of the Canaanites, is called by Mark a Greek, though, as Mark himself says, she was a native of Syro-Phœnicia. See Matt. xv. 22; Mark vii. 26.

The term *Grecians*, however (or Hellenists), which we meet with in the Acts of the Apostles, denotes not the Gentiles, but those Jews, who, born and living in other countries, though occasionally coming up to Jerusalem, as their law required, used the Greek language and the Greek translation of the Scriptures. See Acts vi. 1; ix. 29; xi. 20.

When places are mentioned as lying North, South, East, or West, this is generally to be understood of their situation with respect to Judea and Jerusalem.

II. Without a knowledge of ancient geography, many fulfilled prophecies must be unintelligible. Thus,

Balaam's wonderful prophecy^z of the conquests of Alexander and his successors, and of the Romans, over the Assyrians and Jews, and of the destruction of the Macedonian and Roman empires, would be unintelligible to those who knew not that the family of Chittim, or Kittim (the son of Javan), settled in Macedonia and Italy, that Assur refers to the Assyrians, and Eber to the Jews. Gen. x. 4.

III. Sometimes for want of a knowledge of geography, the peculiar force and beauty of a passage of Scripture is lost to us.

Thus Isa. xxviii. 1, "Woe to the crown of pride," &c. referring to Samaria, now Sebaste. This city, beautifully situated on the top of a round hill, and surrounded immediately by a rich valley, and a circle of other hills beyond it, suggested the idea of a chaplet or wreath of flowers, worn

^z Numb. xxiv. 24.

upon the head on occasions of festivity. Thus the expressions of the proud crown, and the fading flower of the drunkards, add much to the force of the metaphor. The practice of wearing such chaplets is referred to in Wisd. ii. 7, 8. See Lowth on Isaiah.

IV. A knowledge of geography often removes apparent contradictions.

In Luke xxiv. 50 (referring to our Lord's ascension), it is said, "Jesus led his disciples out as far as Bethany," &c.: but in Acts i. 12, we read that the disciples returned from Mount Olivet. Olivet was situated between Bethphage and Bethany, and our Lord ascended from that part of the mountain which lay next Bethany. So that the two accounts are quite consistent.

The two continents of Asia and America are so widely separated from each other by the vast Pacific or Eastern Ocean at their southern extremities, as to give occasion to infidels to cavil at the Mosaic account of all mankind being descended from one common ancestor; but a better acquaintance with geography has entirely confuted this objection. Asia and America are now found to approach each other within 13 leagues, instead of 800, as was supposed; and in this narrow strait there are several intervening islands, as Behring's, &c. Among other good purposes, therefore, the voyages of Captain Cook have rendered an essential service to religion, by robbing infidelity of a favourite objection to the Mosaic account of the peopling of the earth. North America might have been easily furnished with inhabitants from the opposite coasts of Asia, and South America by means of the great chain of newly-discovered tropical isles scattered between the two great continents, and successively colonized from Asia; and also on its eastern side by vessels driven by storms or trade-winds and currents, from the shores of Europe and Africa; and, indeed, the similarity of languages, religion, manners, and customs, in several leading points, furnishes decisive evidence of the descent of all mankind from the same parent stock. See Dr. Hales.

V. A knowledge of geography enables us also to appreciate the minute accuracy of the historian.

Thus, John iv. 49, the nobleman in an agony of mind

says, "*Come down ere my child die,*" &c. The expression of his coming down to Capernaum is singularly illustrated by the present features of the country: for, in fact, the whole route from Cana, according to the position of the place now so called, is a continued descent towards Capernaum. (Dr. E. S. Clarke.) The distance from Cana to Capernaum was about 23 miles. (Dr. Hales.)

VI. Sometimes a knowledge of geography sheds a lustre on character, and suggests some important moral lesson.

Acts viii. 27.—"Behold a man of Ethiopia," &c.; that is, African Ethiopia, lying below Egypt. Geography thus teaches us, that this great officer of state had come from a great distance to worship at the Temple. Ought trifling excuses, then, to keep us from the house of God?

Acts xix. 21.—Here is a vast circuit. So again, in chaps. xiii. and xiv. we find Paul labouring in Seleucia, Cyprus, Pamphylia, Pisidia, Lycaonia; and chap. xvi. called over to Macedonia, and so into Europe. We find him engaged at Thessalonica, Berea, Athens, Corinth, Ephesus, Galatia. A knowledge of the extent and distance of these countries, traversed thus by one who knew that at every step bonds and afflictions awaited him, enables us better to appreciate the ardour of that love of Christ which thus constrained him. What an example to us of self-denial and Christian devotedness!

Again, that Sodom and Gomorrah were in the very midst of the land of Canaan^a, aggravates the guilt of the Canaanites, who, in the time of Joshua, took no warning from their punishment to avoid their sins. Lev. xviii. 24, 25; Josh. x. 40.

It may be remarked also, that Canaan was about the centre of the civilized world, when God placed that people there to whom alone He committed his oracles^b; and we can have little doubt but that this was done in order that they might more easily give instruction to the world. (See Graves on the Pentateuch, Part iii. Lect. v. Effects of Judaism on the Gentiles.)

^a Gen. xix. 23—25.

^b Psalm cxlvii. 19, 20; Rom. iii. 2.

VII. It may often be desirable, when referring to a particular place, to inquire what other remarkable events happened there. This will sometimes throw light even on the immediate subject.

For instance, Gen. xlv. 1, Jacob came to Beersheba, and offered sacrifice. The peculiar propriety of his making this the spot for his first act of public worship on leaving Canaan for Egypt, may be noticed from what had taken place there. It was at Beersheba that his grandfather Abraham called on the name of the everlasting God^c. While Abraham sojourned at Beersheba, it pleased God to make that signal trial of his obedience by requiring him to go into the land of Moriah, and there offer his only son Isaac, whom he loved, for a burnt-offering. To Beersheba Abraham returned with Isaac, enriched with the Divine blessing^d. At Beersheba Jacob's father, Isaac, had the promise renewed to him, and built an altar there, and called upon the name of the Lord. These associations were calculated to attach a solemn importance to this place in the mind of Jacob, and to render Beersheba a spot very suitable for his thus seeking, at this critical period of his life, the blessing of God upon himself and his children.

Judg. ii. 1.—“And an angel of the Lord came up from Gilgal to Bochim,” &c. At Gilgal the Israelites first rested in Canaan: there they renewed their covenant with God. At Gilgal were the twelve stones, memorials of the power and grace of God in drying up the waters of Jordan^e: from thence God had so often gone out with them to battle, and given them success. That the angel came, therefore, from Gilgal, would add greatly to the force of his reproof, by reminding them of their ingratitude.

By observing that Zarephath was in Zidon, and that Jezebel was a Zidonian^f, it is seen that Elijah found shelter from his bitterest enemy in her own country; thus signally does God's providence protect his people. See Psalm lxxxiv. 12.

2 Kings ii. 2—5.—Bethel was infamous for idolatry, and Jericho had lately been built in defiance of a Divine curse. 1 Kings xii. 33; xvi. 34; Josh. vi. 26.—To find

^c Gen. xxi. 33.

^d Gen. xxii. 19.

^e Josh. iv. 20.

^f 1 Kings xvii. 9; xvi. 31.

sons of the prophets, and considerable numbers of them, at such places, is a striking instance of God's reluctance to withdraw the means of grace from the wicked.

Many interesting associations are connected with the Mount of Olives. There, how often had the Saviour spent the night in prayer^g! there He wept over Jerusalem^h: there He foretold its destructionⁱ: there was his agony^k: there his triumph, when, ascending up on high, He led captivity captive^l, and opened the kingdom of heaven to all believers.

VIII. Under the term geography may be included a notice of the climate, weather, &c. A knowledge of these also will throw light on Scripture.

In the thirty-fifth chapter of Isaiah, which so beautifully describes the blessings of the Gospel, we read not only of the excellency of Carmel, but of the glory of Lebanon. This consisted principally in its magnificent cedars: a further reference to which we have in Hosea xiv. 5: "He shall cast forth his roots as Lebanon."

A knowledge of the intense heat of the climate, which is sometimes sufficient to cause instant death, adds to the force of such passages as that of Isaiah, where, referring to our Blessed Saviour, it is said, "He shall be as the shadow of a great rock in a weary land." Isa. xxxii. 2. So also 2 Kings iv. 18, &c.

The dew of that country rendered the ground peculiarly soft and fruitful: with the knowledge of this, refer to Deut. xxxii. 2, and Hosea xiv. 5. The dew fell suddenly and heavily, not a blade of grass escaping it: hence the force of Hushai's remark, "We will light upon him as the dew falleth on the ground." 2 Sam. xvii. 12.

We read in Gen. xxvi. of Isaac digging sundry wells, and of the strife which they occasioned between him and Abimelech, the king of the Philistines.

So again, Moses, magnifying the Divine bounty to the children of Israel, among other peculiar blessings, reckons up, not only great and goodly cities which they

^g Luke xxi. 37; xxii. 39.

John viii. 1; xviii. 2.

^h Luke xix. 41.

ⁱ Matt. xxiv. 3, &c.

^k Luke xxii. 44.

^l Acts i. 12.

builded not, but wells likewise digged, which they digged not. Deut. vi. 11.

We cannot duly appreciate the force of these and similar passages of Scripture, without reflecting that in those hot countries, where water was so scarce, a well or fountain of living or running water was a possession of inestimable value.

At Cairo and Constantinople the gratuitous distribution of water is esteemed a most beneficial charity.

At Suez, a very considerable price, not less than a groat or sixpence a gallon, was paid for fresh water.

Persons are forced to travel across the deserts without any supply for their camels, sometimes as much as eighty miles. The wells too are very deep, many of them being from 160 to 170 feet.

Macknight has the following remarks on the comparison by Peter^m of false teachers to wells without water, and clouds driven by the tempest. "There being few wells, and but little rain in the eastern countries, it was a grievous disappointment to a thirsty traveller to come to a well without water. The husbandman was equally disappointed to see clouds arise which gave the prospect of rain, but which ended in a tempest, which instead of refreshing, destroyed the fruits of the earth. By these comparisons, the ostentation, hypocrisy, levity, and perniciousness of the false teachers are set forth in the strongest colours."

Many allusions are made in Scripture to the whirlwind, especially as illustrative of the irresistible power of God in the punishment of the wicked, and the suddenness with which it sometimes overtakes themⁿ. But the force of such allusions will not be felt unless we are aware of the nature of the whirlwind in those countries. Mr. Bruce, in his travels to discover the source of the Nile, was suddenly enclosed in a violent whirlwind in a plain near that river, which lifted up a camel, and threw it to a considerable distance, with such force as to break several of its ribs: it threw himself and two of his servants down on their faces, so as to make the blood gush out from their nostrils.

Often a quantity of sand and small stones gradually

^m 2 Pet. ii. 17.

ⁿ Prov. i. 27; x. 25. Hosea xiii. 3. Matt. vii. 27.

ascends to a great height, and forms a column 60 or 70 feet in diameter, and so thick, that, were it steady in one spot, it would appear a solid mass. This not only revolves within its own circumference, but runs in a circular direction over a great space of ground, sometimes maintaining itself in motion for half an hour, and at length falling so as to form a small hill of sand. (Belzoni's Egypt.) This explains such passages as this: "They shall be chased . . . like a *rolling* thing before the whirlwind^o." If such is the power of God in the punishment of sinners, let us fear to sin, lest sudden destruction come upon us. Prov. xxix. 1.

1 Sam. xii. 16, 17.—"Now therefore, stand and see this *great* thing which the Lord will do before your eyes. Is it not wheat harvest to-day? I will call unto the Lord, and he shall send thunder and rain." Rain and a thunder-storm in summer would be nothing extraordinary in our country; but in Judea it is very uncommon.

Exod. ix. 18—26.—When Moses foretold to Pharaoh there would be grievous rain in every part of Egypt except the land of Goshen, we cannot duly estimate the hardness of heart displayed by Pharaoh in resisting the evidence of such a miracle, unless we are aware that there is no country on earth where there is so little rain as in Egypt.

But though a knowledge of geography be so important, even an outline of the geography of the various countries referred to in the Bible would far exceed the limits of this work; for the Bible conducts us to the origin of all nations, and touches frequently on their subsequent history, through a period of more than 2000 years.

We must confine ourselves therefore to a more particular notice of that country, which was the principal scene of the facts recorded in the Bible.

GEOGRAPHY OF THE HOLY LAND.

I. *Its Names.*

1. The *Land of Canaan*, from Canaan, the youngest son of Ham, and grandson of Noah, who settled there after the dispersion from Babel. Gen. x.

^o Isaiah xvii. 13.

2. The *Land of Promise*^p, from the promise made by God to Abraham, that his posterity should possess it. Gen. xii. 7 ; xiii. 15.

3. The *Land of Israel*, from the Israelites, or posterity of Jacob, who was honoured by God with the name of Israel for his earnestness in prayer.

4. *Palestine*^q, probably from Palisthan, signifying "Shepherd Land" in the Sanscrit language.

II. *Its Boundaries and Size, &c.*

It lay between lat. 31° and 34°. It is bounded on the North by Cœlo-Syria ; on the East by Arabia Deserta ; on the West by the Mediterranean, or Great Sea ; on the South and South-West by Arabia Petræa, and Egypt. Its extent was about two hundred miles from North to South (*i. e.* from Dan to Beersheba) ; and its breadth about ninety miles.

"Thus it appears that the whole land of Israel is in length about equal to the distance from London to York ; and in its middle and widest parts, less on an average than half its length. We must remember, however, that it differed entirely from that part of our own country in many other respects, and particularly in being much more mountainous, of a better soil, productive of more and better fruits, and under the influence of a climate with which ours cannot be compared." (See Key to Scripture Map of the Holy Land, No. 416, on the List of the Society for Promoting Christian Knowledge.)

III. *Its Divisions.*

Its *natural* division is into the two unequal parts on the Eastern and Western banks of the river Jordan, that on the Western being considerably the larger. This river rises in the mountains of Hermon (a branch of the mountains of Libanus), and running South through the Lake of Genesaret, or Sea of Tiberias or Galilee, after a course of

^p Heb. xi. 9.

^q Exod. xv. 14.

one hundred and fifty miles, loses itself in the Dead Sea, or Sea of the Plain, which occupies the place where Sodom and Gomorrah formerly stood.

Its *historical* divisions are numerous.

When Canaan settled in it, he divided it among his eleven children; each of whom became the head of a distinct nation. Gen. x. 15, &c.

In the time of Abraham (about seven hundred years after Canaan settled in it), it was occupied by ten nations. Gen. xv. 18—21.

On the conquest of it by Joshua, he was commanded by God to divide it by lot into twelve parts. To the Levites no separate district was given; but forty-eight cities scattered over all the tribes were allotted to them; but then, as the two sons of Joseph, Ephraim and Manasseh, had distinct portions, the number continued the same.

In the arrangement of the tribes, Reuben, Gad, and half the tribe of Manasseh were, at their own request, placed on the East side of Jordan, and the remaining nine and a half on the West side of it; to the *North*, Asher, Naphtali, Zebulun, Issachar; in the *middle*, Ephraim, and the remaining half tribe of Manasseh; to the *South*, Dan, Simeon, Benjamin, and Judah.

By Jeroboam's revolt, B. C. 975, the Holy Land was divided into two separate kingdoms, Judah and Israel: Judah, including the tribes of Benjamin and Judah, and having Jerusalem for its capital; Israel, including the remaining ten tribes, and having for its capital the city of Samaria, about thirty miles North-East of Jerusalem.

This division ceased when the kingdom of Israel was overturned by Shalmaneser, king of Assyria, B. C. 721.

About 63 years before the birth of Christ, the Holy Land was reduced to a Roman province by Pompey. The part to the West of Jordan was then divided into Galilee to the North; Samaria in the middle; Judea Proper to the South^r; while that to the East was called Perea.

For any particular notice of its cities, towns, or villages, see Wigram's Geography of the Holy Land.

^r John iv. 3, 4. 43.

§ XV. *Value of some Knowledge of Natural History.*

There are many allusions made in the Scriptures, which can only be explained by some knowledge of the natural history of the countries of the East.

Gen. xlix. 14.—Jacob compares Issachar to an ass. Now we attach to this the idea of slowness, stupidity, and degradation; but in the East, the idea of bodily strength and vigour is suggested by this resemblance; so that though we should say, a bridle for the horse, and a whip for the ass, in the book of Proverbs^s it is said, “a whip for the horse, and a bridle for the ass,” the ass of Eastern countries going more freely than the horse. This also enables us better to understand the sublime description given in Job of the wild ass, Job xxxix. 5—8. See the whole chapter, in which the Almighty Himself is introduced as addressing Job in a speech abounding with references to natural history.

Habak. iii. 19.—To express the confidence of his faith in God under very trying circumstances, Habakkuk says, “He will make my feet like hinds’ feet,” &c. The hart, or hind, is remarkably swift-footed, and able to walk with ease and safety on the dangerous cliffs of the steep rocks. See the same metaphor used Psalm xviii. 33, which was written by David at the conclusion of his wars; it was employed also by Isaiah^t in a prophecy, of which we see a striking fulfilment in Acts iii. 8, &c.

Isa. liii. 6, 7.—They who have erred and strayed from God’s ways, are here compared to wandering sheep: and the gentleness of the lamb is employed to represent the meekness of the “Lamb of God.”

Jer. viii. 7.—The prophet, after upbraiding the Jews for their foolish and shameless apostasy, makes a beautiful allusion to that species of birds styled “birds of passage,” the stork, the turtle, the crane, the swallow. “They,” says Bishop Horne, “by instinct return annually at a set time to the country they had left; whereas by all the

^s Prov. xxvi. 3.

^t Isaiah xxxv. 6.

reasoning and all the exhortation in the world, obdurate man cannot be prevailed upon to forsake his iniquity, and return to God who made him."

Important religious instruction is also derived in Scripture from the instincts and habits of the ostrich and the horse^u. From the lion we may learn boldness in duty^v. Even from the most insignificant creatures and the smallest insects, the ant, the spider, &c., we are taught in Scripture to gather instruction; see the beautiful passages in the book of Proverbs, ch. vi. 6; xxx. 24—28.

Deut. xxxii. 11, 12.—Eagles fly round their nest, and vary their flight, for the instruction of their young: and afterwards, taking them on their backs, they soar with them aloft, in order to try their strength, shaking them off into the air; and if they perceive them to be too weak to sustain themselves, they will with surprising dexterity fly under them again, and receive them on their wings to prevent their fall. The eagle is supposed to be the only sort of bird endowed with this kind of instinct. Hence we see how aptly this bold and beautiful simile describes God's powerful and tender care of the Israelites through the wilderness. See Exod. xix. 4, referring to the lofty flight and peculiar affection of the eagle for its young. See also Isa. xl. 31: "They shall mount up with wings as eagles," &c. Let such promises encourage us to wait upon the Lord with full assurance that He can perfect strength in weakness.

1 Kings xvii. 6.—A knowledge of the voracious habits of the ravens strengthens the force of the miracle, their natural appetites having been so restrained, that they brought meat to Elijah. Who can make question, says Bishop Hall, of the means which God possesses of providing for his creatures, when he sees the very ravens forget their own hunger, and bring food to Elijah? If our faith be not wanting to God, his care shall never be wanting to us.

Psalms xcii. 12.—"The righteous shall flourish like the palm-tree." The fruit of this noble and beautiful tree (remarks Dr. Clark) makes a great part of the diet of the East; the stones are ground for camels; the leaves are made into couches, baskets, &c.; the boughs into fences; the fibres of the boughs into ropes and the rigging of small vessels;

^u Job xxxix. 13, &c.

^v Prov. xxx. 30; xxviii. 1.

the sap into arrack ; and the wood serves for lighter buildings, and fire-wood. From the same root it produces a great number of suckers, which form upwards a kind of forest by their spreading. (See Judges iv. 5.) It is, moreover, an evergreen. La Borde says the palm-tree is most frequently found isolated near a fountain, and is thus presented to the thirsty traveller like a friendly lighthouse, pointing out the spot where water is to be found, and a charitable shade in which he may repose.—Such are the righteous in the desert of this world.

The figurative use which the Scriptures thus make of the works of nature, should lead us to view them in the same association. What Paley says of that train of thinking which constantly refers the phenomena of nature to a supreme intelligent Author, applies with more force to that train of thinking by which, from the works of nature, we are reminded of some great revealed truth: “To have made this the ruling, the habitual sentiment of our minds, is to have laid the foundation of every thing religious in our mind. The world, thenceforth, becomes a temple, and life itself one continued act of adoration.”

§ xvi. *Value of Chronology.*

I. The science of computing and adjusting periods of time is called Chronology ; and on the application of this science depends, in a great measure, the advantage to be derived from history. The consideration of the time when one event happened, as compared with some other event, may be easily shown to be of great importance in the interpretation of Scripture. For instance :

It is an awful aggravation of the guilt of the inhabitants of Sodom and Gomorrah, not only that they were the descendants of holy Noah^x, but that when they had become so utterly wicked^y, Noah had probably not been dead one hundred years. Chronology teaches us this.

1 Sam. iv. 8.—When from chronology we learn that this remark of the Philistines was made more than 330

^x Gen. vi. 9.

^y Gen. xviii. 20.

years after those plagues had been inflicted, it shows the deep impression which the miraculous facts of the Jewish history made on the surrounding nations.

2 Kings xxiii. 13.—The high places which Solomon built for Ashtarothe, &c. appear to have remained more than 350 years. Solomon probably died a penitent; but chronology assists us to show in his instance, that they who introduce corruptions into religion, know not how far they will reach, nor how long they will last.

1 Tim. i. 15.—The date of this Epistle of St. Paul (A. D. 64, *i. e.* nearly thirty years after his conversion) adds great weight to his declaration, that he was the chief of sinners. He cherished to the end of life a deep sense of his sinfulness.

A consideration of the chronological order of the prophetic writings will often suggest important instruction. Thus :

Ezek. xl.—xlviii., perhaps with the single exception of the book of Revelation, is the most obscure and difficult portion of Scripture; yet, viewed chronologically, *i. e.* in reference to the time when it was delivered, it gives a striking illustration how well adapted prophecy was to the moral exigencies of the Church. The subject of these chapters is a prophetic vision, expressed under the figure of a new city and temple. And when was this declared? In the most gloomy season of the captivity, twelve years before Jehoiakim was released from prison by Evil-Merodach. Evidently, therefore, though it was to have its full accomplishment in the times of the Gospel, by the aid of chronology we perceive, that Ezekiel's vision had for its immediate object the consolation of his brethren, who were then lamenting by the waters of Babylon the fate of their former city and temple, which for fourteen years had been lying in utter desolation. The same remark, as applying to Daniel's prophecy, has been already hinted at, p. 33, and exhibits to us how, in the midst of judgment, God remembers mercy. See also p. 286.

Events are not always recorded in Scripture exactly in the same order in which they occurred.

The calling of Abraham to depart from Ur of the Chaldees, as recorded in Gen. xii. 1, preceded that departure

which is related ch. xi. 31. (Compare Gen. xv. 7, with Acts vii. 3.) The death of Isaac (Gen. xxxv. 29) is anticipated, as several transactions, especially those mentioned in chaps. xxxvii. and xxxviii., must have happened during his life.—It was probably thus anticipated, that the history of Joseph might not be disturbed. Isaac is supposed to have lived at least twelve years after Joseph was sold into Egypt, but probably died before the mystery of that event was cleared up. 1 Cor. xiii. 12.

There are some real difficulties in the adjustment of the dates of the Old Testament; in reference to which, works such as Hales' Chronology, &c., must be consulted; but some are easily explained; for instance, at 2 Kings xv. 33, it is said Jotham reigned sixteen years; yet ver. 30 mentions his twentieth year. This chronological difficulty is thus removed: Jotham reigned sixteen years alone; but with his father Uzziah for four years before.

Sons thus frequently reigned with their fathers; and the application of this rule will reconcile many seeming differences in the books of Kings and Chronicles.—Solomon seems to have reigned with David; see 1 Kings i. 32—34.

1 Pet. ii. 17.—“Honour the king.” It adds to the force of this command to learn from chronology, that the tyrant Nero was then the emperor of the world.

II. An *Epoch* is a fixed point, or a certain remarkable date, made use of in chronology, from which to begin or compute years.

Thus the Jews used to reckon from the Creation, from the Flood, from their coming out of Egypt, from the building of the Temple, &c.; the Greeks reckoned by Olympiads^z; the Romans from the foundation of Rome. Christians reckon from the birth of the Lord Jesus Christ.

As an assistance in remembering the order of time in which the several transactions recorded in the Old Testament happened, the following dates are given:

^z The first Olympiad was B.C. 776, 23 years before the building of Rome, and in the reign of Uzziah, king of Judah, about 55 years before the Ten Tribes were taken captive by Shalmaneser.

	YEARS.
From the Creation to the Flood	1656
From the Flood to the call of Abraham . . .	427
From the call of Abraham to the deliverance of the Israelites from Egypt, and the pro- mulgation of the law from Sinai	430*
From the deliverance of the Israelites to the foundation of Solomon's Temple	479
From the foundation of Solomon's Temple to the restoration of the Jews by Cyrus . . .	476
From the restoration of the Jews to the birth of our Lord	536
Making a total from the Creation to the birth of our Lord of	4004

The three periods of Jewish history to which St. Matthew especially draws attention, are: From Abraham to David, 858 years; from David to the Babylonian captivity, 475 years; from the Babylonian captivity to the birth of our Lord, 588 years.

III. *Genealogies*, or lists of ancestors, may appear to some persons the least profitable parts of Scripture, being only a succession of hard names.

But in them is illustrated the most striking fulfilment of prophecy, inasmuch as they enable us to trace the Messiah's descent. (See p. 36.) In the first book of the Chronicles, especially in the 3rd and 4th chapters, we have genealogies carried on for more than 3500 years. St. Matthew gives us one of about 2000 years from Abraham to Christ; and Luke, one of 4000 years from Adam to Christ.

The genealogies of Matthew and Luke differ. St. Luke, composing his Gospel for the use of the Gentiles, would naturally trace the genealogy of our Lord by the line of his only human parent, the Virgin Mary, whose father, though by some writers called Joachim, is by others called Eli. Nor is it strange that the same person should be called by

* From Abraham's arrival in Canaan to the birth of Isaac was 25 years; Isaac was 60 years old when he begat Jacob; and Jacob was 130 years old when he went down into Egypt, making together 215 years; and from his family's coming into Egypt till their departure, was just 215 years more, making a total of 430 years. (Exod. xii. 40, 41.)—*Bp. Patrick.*

these two names, for by comparing 2 Kings xxiii. 34, with 2 Chron. xxxvi. 4, we find that Eliakim was the same name as Jehoiakim or Joakim. St. Matthew, on the contrary, wrote his Gospel for the use of the Jews, and therefore traced the genealogy of our Lord through Joseph, his reputed father; for the Jews never traced a descent through a female, and would not, therefore, be convinced that Jesus Christ was the Son of David, unless it could be shown that his legal father was of that family. They would be satisfied with this, because they in every case regarded a legal in the same light as an actual father. The very fact, however, that these Evangelists differ, is an evidence of their veracity; for, had they been contriving a false story, they would have been careful, at least, on such a subject, to make their statements agree. "Thus," remarks Pascal, "even the apparently weak points in the chain of evidence have their peculiar force to a well-constituted mind." The trifling disagreements in the Gospels are a strong evidence of the truth of the whole, as they confirm the honesty and impartiality of the historians. Again: That the Jews should (as we observe from these genealogies) have traced their Messiah through Tamar and Bathsheba, adulteresses, Rahab, a Canaanite, and Ruth, a Moabitess^a, is another striking evidence of that extraordinary regard to truth which so distinguishes the Bible. The value of any illustration of the truth of the Bible will be appreciated by all who reflect, that on the truth of the Bible rest our hopes for eternity.

Genealogies sometimes, also, throw light on character. Thus we may trace the cause of Korah's rebellion^b, by observing, 1st, that he was of the family of Kohath, which was most nearly related to Aaron, and therefore most likely to aspire to his office: 2ndly, that he was the son of Izhar, the second son of Kohath^c, but that Uzziel, the fourth son of Kohath^d, had been preferred before him, and made prince or ruler of the Kohathites. Again, by attention to the genealogy of Dathan, we may account for his rebellion against Moses: for we find that he was the descendant of

^a Neh. xiii. 1.^b Numb. xv.^c Numb. xvi. 1.^d Numb. iii. 27. 30.

Reuben ^e, Jacob's first-born son ^f, and therefore might seem on worldly principles to have a right to supreme command rather than Moses, the grandson of Levi, the third in descent from Jacob. "The Reubenites," says Bishop Hall, "had the right of the natural primogeniture, yet do they vainly challenge pre-eminence where God had subjected them. But the man that will be lifting up himself in the pride of his heart from under the foot of God, is justly trodden in the dust."

§ xvii. *Value of History and Travels.*

I. The remains of ANCIENT PROFANE HISTORY often afford assistance in the study of the Bible. Thus:

Gen. xvi. 34.—"Every shepherd is an abomination to the Egyptians." We learn from profane history (*i. e.* from a fragment of Manetho, preserved by Josephus), that the Egyptians about 2159 years before the birth of Christ, had been invaded and subdued by a tribe of Cushite shepherds from Arabia, whose yoke they had not long shaken off. Hence their prejudice against the family of Jacob, because they came from the neighbourhood (Palestine) to which these shepherds had been driven. This fact may also serve perhaps to explain the accusation brought against the brothers of Joseph that they were spies; as well as the unwillingness of the Egyptians to eat with the Hebrews. Gen. xlii. 9. 31.

Thus the providence of God overruled oppression and prejudice, so as to make it a shield to his Church: for by the Patriarchs following a profession despised by the Egyptians, that evil communication was checked which might have immediately corrupted their manners, and plunged them into idolatry; and profane history assists us to discern this.

Archelaus, we are informed by Josephus, immediately on succeeding his father Herod, caused the murder of 3000 Jews for having expressed their disapprobation of an act of his father's cruelty. This shows the reason of the fear expressed by Joseph, Matt. ii. 22.

So, again, the best commentary on Deut. xxviii., and our

^e Gen. xlix. 3.

^f Numb. xvi. 1.

Lord's prophecy of the destruction of Jerusalem, is Josephus' history of the Jewish wars. Does our Lord, for instance, say, "Thine enemies shall cast a trench about thee," &c.? Josephus relates the literal fulfilment of this prophecy, telling us, that Titus did thus surround Jerusalem with a trench and rampart of thirty-nine furlongs in length, with thirteen castles or forts, for the purpose of preventing the escape of the inhabitants, and that the utmost distress and misery arose from the famine which ensued. Josephus was a Jew, born at Jerusalem about A.D. 37; and the singular value of his testimony arises from these facts—that he was an eye-witness of the siege of Jerusalem; that the truth of his account of it is attested by the Emperor Titus under his own hand; and that he never embraced Christianity: when, therefore, he records any thing which confirms the truth of the Gospel, he ought to be considered as a most impartial and independent witness.

Matt. xxiv. 15, 16.—Our Saviour not only predicted the siege and destruction of Jerusalem, in plainest terms, to his disciples, but with equal plainness warned the Christians to quit the city before the siege began. History informs us that they profited by these merciful predictions. It is certain that as early as the year 66, before the city was at all surrounded by armies, many of the inhabitants left it, and a place named Pella, on the eastern side of the river Jordan, is mentioned as providing a refuge for the Christians.

Acts ix. 31.—"Then had the churches rest." This rest cannot be attributed to the conversion of Saul, as the persecution continued three years after. But profane history enables us to account for it. The rest here mentioned corresponds exactly in time (A.D. 40) with the attempt which the Emperor Caligula made to set up his statue in the Holy of Holies. The consternation into which this threatened profanation of their temple threw the Jews, diverted their attention for a season even from that on which they were so intensely set—namely, the persecution of the Christian Church; and hence the disciples had rest. (Paley.)

Acts xvii. 16.—"Full of idols," see margin. In confirmation of this, profane history tells us, as has been

already alluded to, p. 40, that Athens had more images than all the rest of Greece; but further than this, it also speaks of Athens as in a peculiar manner the eye of Greece, the learned city, the school of the world; and hence, in connexion with this passage, shows us how little avail genius and learning to preserve men from the grossest folly, if they have not the guidance of God's word! See Rom. i. 22.

Acts xxiii. 3.—“God shall smite thee, thou whited wall.” This prophetic rebuke of Paul was awfully fulfilled, as we learn from Josephus, Bell. Jud. 11. 17. 19. During a violent insurrection in Jerusalem, excited by his son, Ananias was dragged from an old aqueduct, in which he had endeavoured to hide himself, and slain. Not long before, he had by an unjust judgment murdered the Apostle James the Less, the Bishop of Jerusalem, and had sacrilegiously defrauded the inferior priests of their dues, so that some of them even perished for want.—See Hales, vol. iii. p. 539.

Acts xxiv. 25.—From the very surface of this narrative we see how much more anxious Paul was for the salvation of Felix's soul, than for his own deliverance from prison and from death. Now Josephus tells us that Felix was notorious for oppression, and was living in adultery with Drusilla, who was the wife of a foreign king. This leads us yet more to admire the Apostle; it illustrates the peculiar propriety of his reasoning of righteousness, temperance, &c.; and it shows the delicacy as well as fidelity of his preaching, in his seeking to produce conviction of sin, not so much by upbraiding Felix for his iniquity, or charging him with unrighteousness, intemperance, &c., as by reasoning with him on the loveliness of those graces of which he was destitute.

1 Cor. i. 2.—“With all that in every place call upon the name of Jesus Christ our Lord.” This passage implies that the worship of Christ is to be considered as a distinguishing mark of being a Christian; and we have the testimony of a heathen on this point, who wrote not ten years after the death of the Apostle John. The younger Pliny, whom Trajan had sent as governor to the remote provinces of Pontus and Bithynia, in a letter to that emperor (about A.D. 108), after stating that there were vast numbers of Christians there, and giving a strong testimony

to their moral character, adds, that they were wont to meet together on a stated day, before it was light, and sing among themselves in alternate parts a hymn to Christ as God.

II. ECCLESIASTICAL HISTORY, of course, provides us with more illustrations of Scripture than are to be found in profane history. In general, however, they are not so valuable, because they do not come, as in the other case, from those who are indifferent or hostile to Christianity. Yet, on very many accounts, ecclesiastical history is deeply interesting to us: for instance, we should have a very inadequate conception of the extent to which the Gospel was preached by the Apostles, had we only sacred history to appeal to, the Acts of the Apostles noticing scarcely any other travels than those of St. Paul, and evidently not all of his. But from other sources we learn, that the Gospel was preached in Idumea, Syria, and Mesopotamia, by Jude; in Egypt, Marmorica, Mauritania, and other parts of Africa, by Mark, Simon, and Jude; in Ethiopia, by Candace's Eunuch, and Matthias; in Pontus, Galatia, and the neighbouring parts of Asia, by Peter; in the territories of the seven Asiatic Churches, by John; in Parthia, by Matthew; in Scythia, by Philip and Andrew; in the Northern and Western parts of Asia, by Bartholomew; in Persia, by Simon and Jude; in Media, Carmania, and several Eastern parts, by Thomas; in Italy, perhaps in Spain and Gaul, possibly even in Britain, by Paul or some of his fellow-labourers. In many of these places Churches were planted within thirty years after the death of Christ, a period nearly ten years earlier than the destruction of Jerusalem: thus rapidly did this least of all seeds grow up and wax a great tree, and spread out its branches and fill the earth. Mark iv. 31, 32.

Nor is this the greatest benefit to be derived from such a study. It may also enable us, on disputed points, to find out the opinions of good and wise men, who lived before such points had become subjects of controversy.

In a letter still extant, drawn up by the Christians of Smyrna, giving a detailed account of the martyrdom of their aged Bishop Polycarp (A.D. 167), in reply to the accusation of the Jews, that they would worship Polycarp instead of Jesus Christ, they say this is perfectly impossible,

for that Christ only could be the object of their worship: to Him, as the Son of God, they offered adoration; but the martyrs, as disciples and imitators of the Lord, were merely objects of gratitude and love. This is a valuable testimony, declaring to us the practice of the primitive Church, because Polycarp had been taught by the Apostle John.

Phil. ii. 10.—“That at the name of Jesus every knee shall bow.”

Irenæus, who, it has been already remarked, was instructed by Polycarp, quotes this verse, and, describing what sort of adoration was paid to Christ, says, “that every knee should bow to Him as to our Lord and God, our Saviour and King.”

The Fathers of the first three centuries all deliver the same doctrine, and with one consent speak of Christ as having existed from all eternity as very God, and that He voluntarily took our human nature upon Him.

Eusebius, an ecclesiastical historian of the fourth century, also states the following fact: “Moreover, all the psalms and hymns of the brethren, written from the beginning by the faithful, celebrate the praises of Christ, the Word of God, and attribute DIVINITY to Him.”—Euseb. Eccles. Hist. lib. v. c. 27, 28.

There are many passages of Scripture implying that it is the duty of all classes to search the Scriptures (2 Tim. iii. 15; John v. 39; Acts xvii. 11, 12; Psalm i. 2; cxix.; Deut. vi. 7; xi. 18; xxx. 11—15; Luke xvi. 29; Matt. xxii. 29; John xx. 30, 31; 2 Pet. i. 19; 1 Thess. v. 27; Rev. i. 3): and fifteen of the Epistles are addressed indiscriminately to all the saints. It is interesting to see how this duty was enforced by the early Fathers of the Church.

Thus Chrysostom says, “Hear me, ye men of the world; get ye the BIBLE, that most wholesome remedy for the soul; if ye will nothing else, yet at least get the New Testament, St. Paul’s Epistles, the Gospels, and the Acts, that they may be your continual and earnest teachers:” and again, “Hearken not hereto only here in the Church, but also at home; let the husband with the wife, let the father with the child, talk together of these matters; and let them both inquire and give their judgments:” and again, “This is the cause of all ill, that the Scriptures are

not known. Ignorance hath brought in heresies. Therefore hath the grace of the Holy Spirit disposed and tempered them, so that publicans and fishers, and tent-makers, shepherds, and the Apostles, and simple men and unlearned, might be saved by these books, that none of the simpler sort might make excuse by the hardness of them; that the labouring man and the servant, the widow woman, and whosoever is most unlearned, may take some good when they are read. All things that are necessary to us are plain."

Col. iii. 16.—"Let the word of Christ dwell in you richly." Jerome, expounding these words, says, "Here we are taught that the lay people ought to have the Word of God, not only sufficiently, but also with abundance, and to teach, and counsel one another."

And again, Origen says, "Would to God we would all do accordingly as it is written, Search the Scriptures! It were a token that we do love Christ. Then would the Father love us, Christ would love us, and show Himself unto us; He and his Father would come unto us, and dwell in us."

Theodoret speaks of children, women, and servants, in the lowest ranks of society, delvers, ditchers, cowherds, &c., being well instructed in the Scriptures.

These passages from the early Fathers (and many more might be added from Augustin and others) plainly show that the prohibition put by the Romanists on the reading of the Holy Scriptures is an innovation in the Church. See Bishop Jewel on the Holy Scriptures, and the Homily, "Exhortation to the reading of Holy Scripture."

III. MODERN TRAVELS in Eastern countries often throw light on Scripture. Thus in reference to the idolatry of Athens:—About sixty years ago, Dr. Chandler and Mr. Stuart found traces of the grossest idolatry among the ruins of that celebrated city; for instance, on the front of a Doric portico was an inscription, which showed that the Athenians worshipped not only the Roman emperors, but their descendants: there was a statue to Julia, the daughter of Augustus (infamous for her profligacy), on the pediment of which she was styled the goddess Julia, Augusta Providentia.

Dr. E. D. Clarke, and others who have travelled in Judea, are able to identify the very spots where events recorded in the Bible took place. Thus, the very brook where David (B.C. 1063, *i. e.* 2900 years ago,) chose five smooth stones with which to encounter Goliath is yet to be noticed. It has, he says, refreshed many a thirsty pilgrim travelling from Jaffa (the ancient Joppa) to Jerusalem, who must pass it in his way; nothing having occurred to alter the face of the valley of Elah and the surrounding country through which it runs.

Keith has also shown in many particulars the value of modern travels in illustrating the fulfilment of prophecy; as, for instance, in reporting the present barrenness of Judea contrasted with its former great fertility, as described by Scripture. Voltaire ridiculed the idea of the possibility of its having been so fertile and populous as represented in Holy Writ; but Volney, another infidel, has in his travels accumulated facts, which in the most remarkable manner confirm the declarations of Scripture. Thus, by the assistance of modern travels, we see that those who intended to undermine, become the supporters of our faith, through the overruling providence of Him, who "taketh the wise in their own craftiness," and maketh "the wrath of man to praise him." Job v. 13; and Ps. lxxvi. 10.

§ xviii. *Manners and Customs of Eastern Nations.*

The manners and customs of Eastern nations open a wide field; in reference to which, works written professedly on the subject must be consulted—such as Burder, Harmer, &c. The importance of consulting such works may, however, be here illustrated.

I. *Houses, Roofs, &c.*

Deut. xxii. 8.—"When thou buildest a new house, then thou shalt make a battlement," &c.

Are we surprised that this should be the subject of a Divine command? A knowledge of the manners and customs of Eastern countries will explain it. The roofs of their houses were, as they are to this day, flat, and very much used for taking fresh air. It was on the roof of his palace, which commanded a view of Babylon, that Nebu-

chadnezzar uttered his boast, and heard the denunciation of Heaven against it. (See the marginal reading to Dan. iv. 29.) Here they enjoyed the cool refreshing breezes of the evening, and conversed with one another^h. Here they offered up their devotions, as we see in the case of Peterⁱ. Ahaziah probably met with the accident which led to his death, by falling through an opening in the roof on which he was walking^k. From Nehemiah viii. 16, we learn that the Feast of Tabernacles was kept by the people making themselves booths, every one upon the roof of his house. How needful, therefore, that the roof should have battlements! while this command affords another illustration of the value which the Bible sets on human life; a disregard of which is so striking a feature of all false religions. See Psalm lxxiv. 20.

Mark xiii. 15.—In our Lord's prophecy of the destruction of Jerusalem, to express the urgency of the danger and the necessity of immediate flight, He says, "Let him that is on the house-top not go down into the house, neither enter therein," &c. How, then, could he escape? Because there were staircases outside leading from the top of the house to the street.

Houses in the East are built in the form of a square, with an open court-yard in the midst, on each side of which are the apartments. The palaces and courts of justice are frequently built with such courts or inclosures, surrounded entirely, or in part, with some plain or cloistered building: in these, during festivals and public rejoicings, the wrestlers, &c. perform in the area; while the roof of the cloisters round about is crowded with spectators. On this supposition, that in the house of Dagon there was a cloistered structure of this kind, the pulling down of the front or centre pillars only, which supported it, would be attended with the catastrophe in which Samson involved so many Philistines. Judges xvi. 29, 30.

The porch that belonged to the gate of the city was the place of resort for public business and justice.

Psalm cxxvii. 5.—"They shall not be ashamed, but they shall speak with the enemies in the gates," *i. e.* in support

^h 1 Sam. ix. 25.

ⁱ Acts x. 9.

^k 2 Kings i. 2.

of their father, when accused before the court of magistrates.

Isa. xxix. 21.—We read of “him that reproveth in the gate.”

Esth. ii. 19; Dan. ii. 49.—Mordecai and Daniel sat in the king’s gate, *i. e.* they were officers in the court of the king.

Ruth iv. 1.—Boaz went up to “the gate,” as the place where controversies were decided.

“The gate of judgment” is a term still common among the Arabians to express a court of justice, and was even introduced by the Saracens into Spain.

II. *Dress.*

Matt. ix. 20.—The woman, whose trembling faith our Lord so tenderly encouraged, touched, we are told, the hem of his garment.

In Matt. xxiii. 5, we read of the Pharisees making broad their phylacteries, *i. e.* pieces of parchment on which they wrote texts of Scripture, ostentatiously displayed round the border of their garment.

Luke xii. 35.—“Let your loins be girded about,” &c.; a figure to express preparation for the discharge of duty.

The upper garment in Eastern countries was an oblong piece of cloth, square at the corners, having a hem or border all round. It was something like the plaid of a Scotch Highlander, about five yards long by five feet wide. This, on ordinary occasions, they threw loosely over them; but when setting out on a journey, or preparing for any work which required great exertion, they tucked it up with a girdle. Thus Elijah girded up his loins, and ran before Ahab¹; and thus Elisha, urging Gehazi to make haste, bid him gird up his loins and go^m.

Girdles were usually much ornamented, so as to be an important article of trafficⁿ. This explains why Elijah^o, and John the Baptist^p, whose peculiar offices called them in an especial manner to show abstraction from the world, are described as wearing leathern girdles, *i. e.* girdles of the commonest kind, altogether unornamented. In Exodus

¹ 1 Kings xviii. 46.

^m 2 Kings iv. 29.

ⁿ Prov. xxxi. 24.

^o 2 Kings i. 8.

^p Matt. iii. 4.

xxix. 5, is an account of Aaron's girdle; and in Acts xxi. 11—13, Paul's girdle is mentioned in connexion with a very affecting display of his ardent love to the Lord Jesus. In Ephesians vi. 14, is a figurative allusion to the military girdle, "girt about with truth," denoting that as the girdle to the soldier, so godly sincerity to the Christian affords both ornament and strength. See 2 Cor. i. 12; 1 Tim. i. 5. 19; Psalm xxv. 21.

When about to exert their strength by the use of their arm, they removed the heavy folds of this loose dress, and they thus laid the arm bare, or revealed it. This will explain such passages as the following: "The Lord hath made bare his holy arm^q;" *i. e.* hath discovered and put forth his great power, which for a long time seemed to be hid and unemployed: again, "To whom hath the arm of the Lord been revealed^r?" *i. e.* who observes that He is about to exert his power? When this outer garment was thrown off, the persons were said to be "naked," though they had on an inner garment or close-bodied frock. 1 Sam. xix. 24; Isa. xx. 2; Micah i. 8. It was the outer garment that our Blessed Lord laid aside, when, the evening before his crucifixion, He gave that remarkable instance of his love for his Apostles, which was to be to them both an example of humility, and an emblem of his atonement. John xii. 1—8.

In that most touching farewell which Paul took of the Ephesian elders, when, at parting, "they all wept sore^s," one of the solemn appeals which the Apostle makes, as proving his sincerity, is, that he had coveted no man's apparel; *i. e.* no man's *clothes*. The force of this is lost, if we do not know that in the East an important part of a man's wealth is in the apparel, the changes of raiment, which he possesses. This explains the metaphors used in Matt. vi. 19; James v. 2; and Job xxvii. 16.—Changes of raiment are therefore among the most valued presents in the East. See Gen. xlv. 22; 2 Kings v. 22.

Eccles. ix. 8.—"Let thy garments be always white." This would seem a strange direction as addressed to a man in Europe; but in the East, the general dress, especially among the higher classes, was white; and therefore the

^q Isaiah lii. 10.

^r Isaiah liii. 1.

^s Acts xx. 37.

beauty of the dress consisted, not in the shape, for that never varied, but in its whiteness. Hence the injunction implies, "Do not think religion requires you to be negligent; to affect meanness of dress, inconsistent with your station in life."

Jer. xxxvi. 23, 24.—When Jehoiakim had showed the utmost contempt and defiance of God, by cutting with a penknife and casting into the fire his prophecy against him, it is mentioned, as an awful proof of the hardness of their hearts, that he and his servants did not rend their garments. The meaning is, they gave not even any outward sign of sorrow, alarm, or repentance; because, in Eastern countries, rending the garment is the usual mode of expressing such feelings. How unlike his father Josiah^t! Instances are also given of this practice in the following passages:—Gen. xxxvii. 34; 1 Kings xxi. 27; Ezra ix. 3; and Job i. 20. Joel's admonition is also founded upon it: "Rend your heart, and not your garments." Joel ii. 13.

Josh. v. 15.—"Loose thy shoe from off thy foot, for the place, &c., is holy." This was the highest acknowledgment of the Divine presence, customary among Eastern nations. See Exod. iii. 5, 6, and Josh. vi. 2, with v. 15, which implies that this Captain of the Lord's host was God the Son.

Matt. x. 10; Mark vi. 9.—Our Blessed Lord, when giving his first commission to his Apostles, bids them take sandals, not shoes. A knowledge of Eastern customs is necessary to enable us to see the meaning and the propriety of such a direction on so solemn an occasion. The sandal was only the sole of a shoe fixed to the bottom of the foot; it was usually made of rough material, sometimes even of rushes or the bark of palm-trees; shoes on the contrary were made of leather, and were intended for more delicate use. This explanation will show the great moral lesson implied by this injunction; the spirit of which appears to be, "Go in the readiest, plainest manner. Do not be studious of ease; be self-denying, humble. Go as you are, depending on my providence for your protection, and upon my blessing for your reward." See Lightfoot on this passage.

^t 2 Kings xxii. 11.

Matt. xxii. 11.—If we are ignorant of the manners and customs of the East, the punishment thus inflicted on the man who had not on a wedding garment will appear to us very severe. How, it may be asked, could a beggar, who had just been taken from the highways, be expected to have a wedding garment fit for the banquet of a king? But when we know that this garment was provided at the expense of the king, and that not putting it on was considered a direct insult to him, we then enter into its meaning, and learn from it, that a contempt of God's *appointed method of salvation* will involve the utter destruction of the soul. "Without faith it is impossible to please God;" "without holiness no man shall see the Lord." Heb. xi. 6; xii. 14. See also Rev. iii. 18; xix. 8.

Luke vii. 37—46.—It is here mentioned as one of the proofs of the sincerity of the woman's repentance, that she brought an alabaster box of ointment, which was of very great value, and anointed our Lord's feet. This might seem to us a very strange custom; but in those countries it was a mark of the greatest respect, and was especially noticed by our Lord as such. Her example in this act teaches us, as Bishop Hall remarks, that the soul which is truly touched with a sense of its sin can think nothing too good or too dear for Christ. Phil. iii. 7—11.

III. *Various other Manners and Customs.*

D'Arvieux gives a remarkable instance of an Arab, who, having received a wound in his jaw, chose to hazard his life rather than suffer the surgeon to take off his beard. To have the beard plucked was considered a greater disgrace, than among us to be publicly whipped and branded with a hot iron. This will explain various passages of Scripture, 2 Sam. x. 4, 5, Isa. vii. 20, and l. 6, where the metaphor is used to express the utter contempt and detestation to which our Blessed Lord, in love to sinful man, surrendered Himself.

Matt. ix. 17.—"Neither do men put new wine into old bottles." Why not? Because their bottles were made of skin, not glass, and hence, like those of the Gibeonites, might become rent. Josh. ix. 13.

Ps. cxix. 83.—“I am become like a bottle in the smoke.” A leathern bottle thus placed would become shrivelled and useless; and in the same manner had sorrow so dried up the beauty and strength of the Psalmist, that he seemed to himself to have become useless and despicable.

Ps. lvi. 8.—“Put thou my tears into thy bottle.” Mourners’ tears were put into a bottle, as a remembrance of affection. So David prays that God will remember his sorrow.

2 Kings iii. 11.—When Elisha was made the instrument of delivering three kings and their armies from destruction, he was introduced to them as one who had poured water on the hands of Elijah. In the East, the hands are washed by the servant, who, while the master holds them over a basin, pours water upon them. Hence the phrase denotes that Elisha had been the servant and disciple of Elijah.

Prov. xxi. 17.—“He that loveth oil shall not be rich.” Why not? Oil was much used in rich feasts; it implies therefore that they who indulge in luxuries seldom become rich. “Often,” says an old writer, “those who once could not live without dainties, have come to want necessities.”

Deut. xxxiii. 3.—“They sat down at thy feet,” *i. e.* they received instruction from thee. So Isaiah, speaking of Abraham, says that God “called him to his foot^u.” Martha had a sister, “who also sat at Jesus’ feet^w.” Saul of Tarsus was “brought up at the feet of Gamaliel^x.” Scholars in Eastern countries sat at the feet of their masters, and the place would remind them of the humility which became them as learners.

Luke vii. 37.—How could the woman, while Jesus sat at meat, wash his feet when she was standing *behind* Him? Because they did not sit, as we do, at table, but reclined with their feet on a couch, which is sometimes called in Scripture a bed; see the account of Ahasuerus’ ostentatious feast^y. So also John is spoken of as leaning on Jesus’ bosom^z. They used to lie so that the shoulders of one were turned towards the breast of the other; all their right hands were turned towards the dishes, and they leaned on their left shoulders.

^u Isaiah xli. 2.

^w Luke x. 39.

^x Acts xxii. 3.

^y Esther i. 6.

^z John xiii. 23.

1 Sam. ix. 23, 24.—At the first meeting of Saul and Samuel, the cook was ordered to set the “shoulder” before Saul. The shoulder of lamb, with butter and milk poured over it, is reckoned a peculiar delicacy in the East. Josephus says it was called the *Royal* portion.

Deut. xxv. 4; 1 Cor. ix. 9; 1 Tim. v. 18.—“Thou shalt not muzzle the ox when he treadeth out the corn.” We use a flail, but they turned in oxen on the barn-floor to tread it out. “The Moors and Arabs,” says Dr. Shaw, “continue to tread out their corn in this way.”

Isa. xxxii. 20.—The prophet Isaiah, looking forward to the time of the Gospel, when the Spirit should be poured out from on high, says, “Blessed are they that sow beside all waters, that send forth thither the feet of the ox and the ass.” The expressions of sowing beside all waters, and sending forth thither the feet of the ox and the ass, present a difficulty to those acquainted only with our mode of farming; but they exactly answer to the manner of planting rice, as described by Sir John Chardin. While the earth is covered with water, they cause it to be trodden by oxen, asses, &c., and after the ground underneath has been thus prepared, they sprinkle the rice on the surface of the water.

Matt. vi. 30.—. . . “the grass, which to-day is, and to-morrow is cast into the oven,” &c. It is usual in Eastern countries to employ the stalks of flowers, myrtle, rosemary, &c., to heat their ovens. This affords a clear comment on the words of our Saviour, by which He so beautifully enforces repose on God’s Providence. The scarcity of fuel, especially wood, in most parts of the East, is so great, that they supply it with every thing capable of burning. Vine twigs are particularly mentioned as so used, and women and children are employed to gather them, and lay them in store for use. See allusions to this in Isaiah xxvii. 11, and John xv. 6.

Matt. xxiv. 41.—“Two women shall be grinding at the mill,” &c. In those countries, and in that age of the world, the immense advantage of employing wind and water for the turning of mills was unknown; their corn was ground by a hand-mill, turned chiefly by female slaves. This shows the deep degradation imposed on Samson^a, and threatened

^a Judges xvi. 21.

to Babylon^b: "Come down, &c., take the millstones and grind," &c. It was a *woman* who cast a piece of a millstone upon Abimelech's head^c. They usually ground it at break of day: hence the noise of millstones was a token of a populous and thriving country. See in reference to this, Jer. xxv. 10; Rev. xviii. 22, "The sound of the millstone shall be heard no more at all in thee."

Matt. xii. 20.—"The smoking flax," &c., *i. e.* the wick of a candle newly lighted, or just ready to expire from want of oil. The Jews used flax as we do cotton for candles or lamps. Thus the Saviour encourages the first rising of holy desire in the young convert, and revives the dying graces of the returning sinner, persevering in his work of mercy till He bring them to heaven.

Luke ix. 5.—"Shake off the very dust," &c.: and again, Luke x. 11, "Say, Even the very dust do we wipe off," &c. We have an instance of their doing so at Antioch; thus expressing utter renunciation, so as to have nothing with them in common. Acts xiii. 51.

Jer. xxxvi.—That which, in ver. 18, is called a book, is in ver. 23 called a roll. As they were ignorant of the art of printing, which was not discovered till 2000 years afterwards, their books consisted of pieces of parchment rolled upon two sticks. See Luke iv. 17; where the Greek might more properly be translated "unrolled the book."

Matt. xx. 6.—"And about the eleventh hour he went out, &c., and saith unto them, Why stand ye here *all the day* idle?" At eleven o'clock, according to our mode of computing time, not half the day is gone; but the Jews reckoned the hours from sunrise, making noon the sixth hour, and the time of sunset the twelfth hour, so that at the eleventh hour the day was nearly past. This fact adds to the force of Peter's reasoning, "seeing it is but the third hour of the day^d;" that is, about nine o'clock in the morning. This was the ordinary time for their morning sacrifice and prayer, before which time they did not eat and drink any thing. The earliest mention of hours in the sacred writings occurs in the prophecy of Daniel^e; and as the Chaldeans,

^b Isaiah xlvii. 1, 2.

^c Judges ix. 53.

^d Acts ii. 15.

^e Dan. iii. 6. 15; v. 5.

according to Herodotus, were the inventors of this division of time, it is probable that the Jews derived their hour from them.

Matt. xxvii. 45.—“Now from the sixth hour there was darkness over all the land unto the ninth hour;” *i. e.* from noon till about three o’clock: the passover being always kept at the full moon, this could not arise in the ordinary course of nature from an eclipse of the sun.

Matt. xiv. 25.—“And in the fourth watch of the night Jesus went unto them, walking on the sea;” *i. e.* in the last of the four divisions, and shortly before daybreak.—The Jews originally divided the night into three watches; the *first* or beginning of watches is mentioned in Lam. ii. 19; the *middle* watch in Judges vii. 19; and the *morning* watch in Exod. xiv. 24. But in the time of our Lord they had learnt from the Romans to divide it into four watches; a practice which they still retain. See Mark xiii. 35, which contains a solemn admonition to be ever living in a state of preparation for death, from the suddenness with which it may overtake us. The four divisions of the night are here alluded to—the “even,” the “midnight,” the “cock-crowing,” and the “morning.”

Isa. v. 10.—In God’s awful denunciation against the covetousness of the Jews, it is said, “Ten acres of vineyard shall yield one bath, and the seed of an homer shall yield an ephah.” A bath was about seven gallons and a half, so that an acre of land would not yield a gallon of wine. An ephah was but one-tenth of an homer; so that, instead of the seed yielding, as it often did in that fruitful country, an hundred-fold^t, nine-tenths of the seed would be lost. Thus vain is man’s effort without God’s blessing.

2 Kings v. 5. 16.—“6000 pieces of gold,” or as the Arabic reads, “6000 shekels of gold.” We see more fully the disinterestedness of Elisha in rejecting Naaman’s present, when by calculating 1*l.* 16*s.* 5*d.* per shekel, the amount appears to be 10,925*l.*, and which formed only a part of the property he had brought to obtain his cure. This was the “hour of temptation” which indeed proved fatal to Gehazi.

Matt. xviii. 23.—Much light is thrown upon the parable of the debtors, by our knowledge of the fact, that a talent

^t Matt. xiii. 8.

is 750 oz. of silver, which at 5s. per ounce, is 187*l.* 10*s.*; and the Roman penny, one-eighth of an ounce, or 7½*d.* According to Dean Prideaux's computation, the 10,000 talents referred to in this parable, if talents of gold, would amount to 72,000,000*l.* sterling: an immense sum, showing the number and weight of our offences against God, and our utter incapacity of making Him any satisfaction, and marking, therefore, still more clearly the sin of not forgiving the small offences of our fellow-creatures.

Matt. xx. 2.—A Roman penny (or denarius) was equal to about 7½*d.* of our money. This, by giving us the ordinary daily wages of an agricultural labourer at that time, enables us to form a better estimate of the relative value of money then and now: thus, “Why was not this ointment sold for 300 pence^g?” &c., a sum equivalent to the wages of a labourer for 300 days, and certainly therefore sufficient to excite the covetousness of one who was content to betray the Son of God for 30 pieces of silver, not half that amount; for the 30 pieces of silver, or 30 shekels^h, were but 3*l.* 10*s.* 8*d.*; the priceⁱ that was paid for a slave when killed by a beast. How striking a fulfilment of the prophecy, “He is despised and rejected of men^k!” What a motive to us to love Him! See 2 Cor. viii. 9.

To these topics, as of importance in the interpretation of the Bible, many more might be added; such as a knowledge of the original languages in which the Old and New Testaments were written, &c. But these few hints are sufficient to enforce the duty of diligence and humility; and to show that, however extensive is our learning, we may, as the bee does, bring the sweets of every flower to this as our hive.

§ xix. *On the Difficulties and seeming Contradictions of the Bible.*

Since so much knowledge is proved to be necessary to a right understanding of the Bible, we may easily believe that

^g John xii. 5.

^h Matt. xxvi. 15.

ⁱ Exod. xxi. 32.

^k Isaiah liii. 3.

the difficulties or seeming contradictions which occur to us in reading it, most probably arise from our ignorance or inattention, and this admits of abundant illustration.

Judges i. 19.—“The Lord was with Judah; and he drove out the inhabitants of the mountain, but could not drive out the inhabitants of the valley, because they had chariots of iron.” Voltaire scoffs at this, as if it implied that the Lord of heaven and earth is represented as being baffled by the chariots of iron, whereas the term “he” refers to Judah, not to the Lord. Judah’s faith failed him, and he found that, according to his faith, so was it unto him¹: weak in faith, he was weak in power. Yet Voltaire was one of the most acute of infidels. But the frivolity of such objections, made by such men, shows how hatred of the truth blinds the mind to the perception of it.

Prov. xxvi. 4.—“Answer not a fool according to his folly,” &c. The next verse is, “Answer a fool according to his folly,” &c. But a little attention to the reason given in each case removes the seeming contradiction.

We ought not to answer a fool according to his folly, so as to be like him; *i. e.* so as to betray, in the manner of answering him, the same evil temper which he showed. This Moses did at Meribah^m; and David in his answer to Nabalⁿ; and the men of Judah and Israel in their disputes about David^o.

We ought to answer a fool according to his folly, lest he be wise in his own conceit; *i. e.* we ought to answer him in such a manner as to expose his folly. Thus Job answered his wife^p—and our Blessed Lord’s life affords abundant instances: as when He was attacked by the Scribes and Pharisees because his disciples transgressed the tradition of the elders^q; when they desired of Him a sign from heaven^r; when they questioned the authority by which He acted^s; and when they inquired of Him as to the lawfulness of giving tribute to Cæsar^t.

2 Kings xvi. 9.—The king of Assyria is said to have “hearkened unto Ahaz;” but in 2 Chron. xxviii. 20, we

¹ Matt. ix. 29.

^m Numb. xx. 7—13.

Psalm cvi. 33.

ⁿ 1 Sam. xxv. 21, 22.

^o 2 Sam. xix. 41—43.

^p Job ii. 10.

^q Matt. xv. 2—9.

^r Matt. xvi. 1—4.

^s Matt. xxi. 23—27.

^t Matt. xxii. 16, &c.

read that he "distressed him, and strengthened him not." Both statements, as Horne remarks, are true. He did help him against the king of Syria, took Damascus, and delivered Ahaz from the power of the Syrians. But the service was of little value, for the Assyrian monarch did not assist Ahaz against the Edomites or Philistines; and he distressed him by taking the royal treasures and the treasures of the temple, and rendered him but little service for so great a sacrifice.

This seeming contradiction is illustrated by what happened in our own nation. The Britons invited the Saxons to help them against the Scots and Picts. The Saxons accordingly came and assisted them for a time, but at length they made themselves masters of the country. (H. Horne.)

Acts ix. 7.—In the account of Paul's miraculous conversion, it is said that the men who journeyed with him "heard a voice, but saw no man." In Acts xxii. 9, it is said, they heard not the voice of him that spoke. The Greek word translated "heard," very frequently means "understood." They heard a voice, but not the words spoken; they heard a sound, but did not understand the meaning of it. Just as we are told that Israel beheld Joseph's sons, while a few verses after, it is said his eyes were dim so that he could not see; *i. e.* he could see, but not distinctly—could not distinguish the features unless they came near. Gen. xlviii. 8. 10.

Acts i. 18.—"Now this man (*i. e.* Judas) purchased a field," &c.; but St. Matthew tells us^u that the chief priests bought the field with the money which Judas threw down in the midst of them. Many commentators, as Whitby and Doddridge, remark that an action is sometimes said in Scripture to be *done* by a person who was the *occasion* of doing it. Thus, in one place^v it is said that "Jesus baptized;" in another^w, that "Jesus himself baptized not, but his disciples." The passages are easily reconciled: his disciples baptized by his authority, but He did not baptize with his own hands. (See Gen. xlii. 38; Exod. xxiii. 8; 1 Sam. xii. 8; 2 Kings xxii. 16; Rom. xiv. 15; 1 Cor. vii. 16; 1 Tim. iv. 16.)

Acts xvi. 12.—St. Luke, in relating the first introduction of Christianity into Europe, speaks of Philippi in Macedonia

^u Matt. xxvii. 7.

^v John iii. 22.

^w John iv. 1, 2.

as the chief city of that part of Macedonia, and a colony ; and in verse 21 implies that it was a Roman colony. The silence of contemporary profane history as to this fact rendered it a difficulty, even to learned men, and threw the suspicion of inaccuracy upon Luke's narrative ; but some ancient coins have been since discovered, on which Philippi is described under this character, particularly one which states that Julius Cæsar himself bestowed on this city the dignity and privileges of a Roman colony, which were afterwards confirmed and augmented by Augustus.

Sometimes, though comparatively very seldom, the translation might be improved, or the original will admit of another rendering, and thus the difficulty might be removed.

The Hebrews express their numbers by letters, and some of their letters are very much alike : hence, as Dr. Kennicott has shown satisfactorily, some seeming contradictions, with regard to numbers, have arisen from one number being inadvertently written instead of another : ך is 2, כ is 20, ך is 1, ך is 1000 ; so that the careless making or reading a tittle upon a letter might change units into thousands. Thus are such passages as 2 Sam. viii. 4, 1 Chron. xviii. 4, reconciled. The letter ך zayin with a dot upon it stands for seven thousand, and the final letter ך noon, for seven hundred ; the great similarity of these letters might easily cause the one to be mistaken for the other, and so produce an error in this place.

2 Sam. xii. 31.—David is said to have put the Ammonites under saws and under harrows of iron, &c. : which gives the impression of great cruelty on his part. Were there no answer to this, we must not shrink from charging him with whatever guilt might properly attach to the act, the Bible itself furnishing the principle by which to do so. But the original Hebrew admits of its being rendered, instead of "under," "to saws," &c., which implies nothing more than employing them as slaves in the most mean and laborious offices. The word translated "harrows of iron" may also be rendered "iron mines." It is indeed said^x that David cut them with saws ; but seven of the Hebrew manuscripts collated by Dr. Kennicott have the word

^x 1 Chron. xx. 3.

which means, "he put them to saws," &c. See H. Horne, vol. i.

This illustration has been given to show the value of a knowledge of the learned languages, and of those diligent researches which learned men have made to throw light on Scripture. "Pertness and ignorance," as Bishop Horne remarks, "may ask a question in three lines, which it may cost thirty pages to answer." But thus has God sanctified the use of learning, and would teach the unlearned to respect it. "Some things in the Scriptures are hard, I deny it not," says Bishop Jewel: "it is very expedient that somewhat should be covered, to make us more diligent in reading, more desirous to understand, more fervent in prayer, more willing to ask the judgment of others, and to presume less on our own judgment." Mystery is only another name for our ignorance: "and those passages," as Boyle says, "which teach us nothing else, may at least teach us humility." We may also be assured, that while "the wicked shall not understand," and "a scorner seeketh wisdom and findeth it not," "the meek will he teach his way," "he will beautify the meek with salvation." Psalm xxv. 9; cxlix. 4.

§ XX. *Quotations illustrating the leading object of this chapter.*

Mosheim, speaking of the method of interpreting the Scriptures, and teaching religion, in the first century of the Christian Church, says, "Those who performed the office of interpreters, studied, above all things, plainness and perspicuity. The great study of those who embraced the Gospel, was rather to express its Divine influence in their dispositions and actions, than to examine its doctrines with an excessive curiosity, or to explain them by the rules of human wisdom."

Melancthon says; "It is necessary in the Church diligently to investigate and adhere to the simple, natural, grammatical sense of Scripture. We are to listen to the Divine word, not to corrupt it. We must not play tricks with it, by fanciful interpretations, as many in all ages have

done. The plain natural sense of Scripture always carries with it the richest and most valuable instruction."

Luther says: "The literal meaning of Scripture is the whole foundation of faith, the only thing that stands its ground in distress and temptation."

Hooker says: "I hold it for a most infallible rule in exposition of sacred Scripture, that where a literal construction will stand, the furthest from the letter is commonly the worst." *Eccles. Polity*, b. v. ch. lix.

The following are given as illustrations of the violations of this rule, in addition to that already given, p. 90.

2 Tim. ii. 17, 18.—"Hymeneus and Philetus . . . saying that the resurrection is past already;" that is, they spiritualized the plain declarations of the Bible on this subject, declaring that such passages were not to be taken in their simple, natural, grammatical sense, but as intending only a spiritual resurrection from ignorance and error.

Lampe, whose Commentary on St. John is described by Hartwell Horne as unquestionably the most valuable work on that Gospel that was ever published, endeavours thus to interpret the miracle of the marriage in Cana: by the bridegroom is meant the governors of the Jewish Church; the bride is the Jewish Church itself; the marriage is the Christian dispensation; the failing of the wine, the departure of the Spirit of God from the Jewish Church, which had begun to depart from the purity of the law: the mother of our Lord is the heavenly Jerusalem, bringing into the liberty of the Gospel the children of the Jewish Church: but she is reprovèd for impatience, not knowing the times and seasons or the hour, which had not yet come; the water being changed into wine represents prophecy and the law being changed into the Gospel; with much more of the same kind. (Lampe, vol. i. pp. 518—520.)

The fascination of the ingenuity of such interpretations constitutes their peculiar danger, especially when adopted by men so learned and pious as Lampe. Cardinal Bellarmine, one of the most learned and upright of his order, whom Pope Sextus V. condemned for not going far enough in the assertion of Papal power, attempts to prove, from a comparison of Acts x. 13, "Rise, Peter, kill," &c. with John xxi. 16, that the duty of the Pope, as the successor

of Peter, is to put heretics to death: See T. H. Horne, vol. ii. p. 770, second edition.

On the mysterious doctrines of predestination, election, &c., the martyr Ridley observes: "In these matters I am so fearful, that I dare not speak further; yea, almost none otherwise than the text doth, as it were, lead me by the hand."

"The right way of interpreting Scripture," says Cecil, "is to take it as we find it, without any attempts to force it into any particular system."

"The Scriptures are the mysteries of God," says Bishop Jewel: "let us not be curious: let us not seek to know more than God hath revealed by them. They are the sea of God: let us take heed that we be not drowned by them. They are the fire of God: let us take comfort by their heat, and warily take heed they burn us not. They that gaze over-hardly upon the sun, take blemish in their eye-sight."

Boyle says: "It ought rather to recommend than disparage the Scriptures, that what is revealed is so copious and extensive, that, like a river, it will supply a lamb with what may quench its thirst, and cannot be exhausted by an elephant." And again: "The Scriptures being composed of several obscure texts of Scripture, mixed with clear ones, several devout persons have rather chosen to read other books, which, being free from difficulties, might promise more instruction; but as the moon, notwithstanding her spots, gives more light than the stars that are luminous, so the Scripture, notwithstanding its dark passages, will afford a Christian more light than the best authors."

"The Scripture is full, as well of low valleys, plain ways, and easy for every man to use and to walk in, as also of high hills and mountains which few men can climb unto. And whosoever giveth his mind to Holy Scriptures with diligent study and burning desire, it cannot be, saith St. John Chrysostom, that he shall be left without help. For either God Almighty will send him some godly Doctor to teach him^a, or else if we lack a learned man to instruct and teach us, yet God Himself from above will give light unto our minds, and teach us those things which are neces-

^a Acts viii. 26—39.

sary for us and wherein we be ignorant. If we read once, twice, or thrice, and understand not, let us not cease so, but still continue reading, praying, asking of others, and so by still knocking, at the last the door shall be opened, as St. Augustine saith." (Homily, Exhortation to the reading of Holy Scripture.)

"The best way to find out truth is to be much in the study of the Scriptures. The Spirit of God leads thereby to things useful." (Basil.)

"If you ask what is truth, you must not do as Pilate did, ask the question, and then go away from Him that only can give you an answer; for as God is the author of truth, so is He the teacher of it." (Jeremy Taylor.)

"Scripture doth best interpret itself." (Lowth.)

"Judge of one part of revelation according to the analogy of the whole, and be sure never by your interpretations make God the author of contradictions. 'Let us prophesy according to the proportion of faith^b,' says the Apostle; let us interpret all the parts of Holy Writ according to the *analogy of faith*, so as to correspond and agree with the whole and with one another." (Bp. Newton.)

"It is not lawful so to expound one place of Scripture that it may be repugnant to another." (Art. xx. of the Church of England.)

"Make the word of God as much as possible its own interpreter. You will best understand the word of God by conferring it with itself, 'comparing spiritual things with spiritual.' 1 Cor. ii. 13." (Bp. Newton.)

"Particular diligence should be used in comparing the parallel texts of the Old and New Testaments. It should be a rule with every one who would read the Holy Scriptures with advantage and improvement, to compare every text which may seem either important for the doctrine it may contain, or remarkable for the turn of expression, with the parallel passages in other parts of Holy Writ, *i. e.* with passages in which the subject matter is the same, the sense equivalent, or the turn of expression similar." (Bishop Horsley.) These parallel passages are easily found by the marginal references now frequently given in our Bibles.

"O God, thou hast revealed more than we can know;

^b Rom. xii. 6.

enough to make us happy! Teach us a sober knowledge, a contented ignorance." (Bp. Hall.)

§ xxi. *Short Account of English Translations of the Bible.*

We have accounts of various parts of the Bible being translated into Saxon, when that language was spoken in England.

The Psalms were translated by Adhelm, the first Bishop of Sherborne (A.D. 706). The Four Gospels, by Egbert, Bishop of Lindisfern, who died A.D. 721.

The Venerable Bede also translated various parts, if not the whole of the Bible, into Saxon. King Alfred translated the Psalms, and Elfric, Abp. of Canterbury, parts of the Old Testament, about A.D. 995.

English translations of the Bible were also made in the 13th and 14th centuries. But of the complete English translations of the Bible the first was:—

Wickliffe's Bible, about A.D. 1380. This was before printing was invented; transcripts therefore were obtained with difficulty, and copies were scarce. Before Wickliffe's translation, the price of a Bible in Latin, an unknown tongue to all but the learned, was as much as a labouring man's price of work for fifteen years, and equal to 300*l.* of our money. Even after Wickliffe's own copy was finished, the value of a New Testament was 2*l.* 16*s.* 6*d.*, equal to 30*l.* now. (Gilly's Protestant Forefathers.)

In 1390, the 13th year of Richard II., a bill was brought into the House of Lords for the purpose of suppressing it, but through the influence of John of Gaunt, Duke of Lancaster, the king's uncle, was rejected. The followers of Wickliffe were then encouraged to publish another and more correct translation of the Bible. But in the year 1408, in a convocation held at Oxford by Archbishop Arundel, it was decreed that no one should thereafter translate any text of Holy Scripture into English by way of a book, or little work, or tract; and that no book of this kind should be read, that was composed lately in the time of John Wickliffe, or since his death. This constitution led the way to great persecution; and many persons were punished severely, and even with death, for reading the Scriptures in English.

Tindal's New Testament. (A.D. 1526). This was the first

printed edition of any part of the Scriptures into English. He had taken the precaution of printing it on the Continent; but Tonstall, Bishop of London, and Sir Thomas More, Lord Chancellor, succeeded in buying up and burning almost the whole impression. This enabled Tindal to publish an improved edition. He also translated parts of the Old Testament.

In the year 1531, at the instigation of Henry VIII. and his council, he was imprisoned, and after a long confinement strangled, A.D. 1536, by order of the Emperor, at Villefont, near Brussels, and his body reduced to ashes.

Miles Coverdale's Bible (A.D. 1535). Coverdale, afterwards Bishop of Exeter, published a translation of the Bible (the greater part of which was Tindal's) and dedicated it to King Henry the Eighth. This is the first English Bible allowed by royal authority, and a copy of it was by royal proclamation ordered to be placed in the choir of every parish church, to enable every man to read therein.

Matthews' Bible (A.D. 1537). John Rogers, who assumed the name of Thomas Matthews, and who had assisted Tindal in his Biblical labours, edited a Bible, probably at Hamburgh.

Taverner's Bible (A.D. 1539). This was a kind of intermediate work, being a correction of Matthews' Bible.

The great Bible (A.D. 1539). This was a revised edition, corrected by Cranmer and Coverdale, and so called because printed in large folio. There were several editions of it, and particularly one in 1540, for which Cranmer wrote a preface, showing that "Scriptures should be had and read of the lay and vulgar people;" hence this edition of 1540 is called Cranmer's Bible.

During the reign of Edward VI. (a period of seven years and a half) no new versions were executed, though eleven editions were printed both of the Old and New Testament.

The Geneva Bible (A.D. 1560). Coverdale, John Knox, Christopher Goodman, and other English exiles, who had taken refuge in Geneva, published this translation; the New Testament in 1557, and the remainder of the work in 1560. To it were added notes, favouring the peculiar doctrines of Calvin.

Abp. Parker's, or the Bishops' Bible (A.D. 1568). This

was so called because he, with other learned persons, eight of whom were Bishops, published this translation. This was in the reign of Queen Elizabeth.

The Rhemish New Testament (A.D. 1582). This translation into English was published by the Romanists at Rheims. They retained many Eastern, Greek, and Latin words, and introduced so many difficult expressions, that they contrived to render it unintelligible to the common people. Shortly after,

The Douay Old Testament (A.D. 1609-10). Cardinal Allen is understood to have had a principal share in this work. The Rhemish New Testament, and Douay Old Testament, form the present English Bible of the Romanists.

King James's Bible. *This is the English translation of the Bible now in common use.* It was begun in the spring of 1607, in the reign of King James I., and finished in about three years. Fifty-four of the most learned men in the Universities and other places were commissioned to undertake the work of translation: but seven of these having, from illness and other causes, relinquished their task, the work was performed by forty-seven. The translators were ranged under six divisions, and several portions of the Bible were assigned to them, according to the several places where they were to meet, confer, and consult together. The name which stands at the head of the list of translators is that of Dr. Lancelot Andrews, first Fellow, and afterwards Master of Pembroke College, Cambridge. He was at that time Dean of Westminster, and became Bishop successively of Ely and Winchester. After long expectation, and great desire of the nation, the translation of the Bible came forth in the year 1611, the divines employed having taken the greatest pains in conducting the work; for they had not only examined the original, but also compared together all the existing translations, both ancient and modern.

As the free circulation of the Scriptures in the language of any country has ever been one of the most important instruments in implanting true religion where it did not previously exist, and in awakening a revival of it where it has become decayed, our privileges in this respect ought to awaken in us a solemn sense of our responsibility to make that book a lamp to our feet, and light to our path, which the providence and grace of God have rendered so accessible.

PART II.

GOVERNMENT AND PUBLIC WORSHIP OF THE JEWS,
WITH SOME NOTICES OF JEWISH SECTS, &c.

CHAPTER I.

THE GOVERNMENT OF THE JEWS.

CONTENTS.—§ i. *Its distinguishing feature, a Theocracy.* § ii. *Their Laws.* § iii. *The Sabbatical Year and the Jubilee, as illustrating their Government and Laws.* § iv. *Evidence of the Divine Origin of the Mosaic Law, from the circumstances under which it was given.*

THE great purpose for which the Jews were selected by God, explains the peculiarity of that constitution by which they were formed into a nation immediately on leaving Egypt.

As has been already noticed (more particularly in connexion with the prophecies and types interwoven with their institutions and history, see p. 64), the great purpose of their selection by God from the rest of mankind was, to preserve the knowledge of Himself as the one true God, and to prepare the minds of men for the coming of Christ, the world's great Deliverer.

But what was the chief danger which, humanly speaking, threatened to defeat this purpose? Their apostasy into idolatry. The world around them had apostatized into idolatry; that is, it had sunk into the total forgetfulness that the world was God's world, formed by his power, and governed by his will. The tendency of their own hearts was towards idolatry. Ezek. xx. 8.

Hence, as subordinate to the great purpose of preparing for the coming of Christ, their government was so framed, and so enforced, as to be a constant check upon idolatry. This was its primary object; but it was so framed and so enforced as to be also indirectly a protest against the idolatry of the world. See Numb. xxxiii. 4; 1 Sam. v. vi.; Isa. xxi. 9; Jer. l. 2; li. 52; Dan. iii. vi.; and the prophetic writings throughout.

To this end a constant, visible, miraculous interposition of God's providence attended them; which constant visible interposition of God's providence, connecting temporal rewards with obedience, and temporal punishments with disobedience, brought before them at each step in opposition to every form of idolatry, God as the only disposer of all things, of happiness and misery, of life and death. The spirit of their dispensation in this respect is expressed in the song of Moses: "See *now*"—(from the rewards in this life following obedience, and the punishment following disobedience to my commands)—"see now that I, even I, am he, and there is no God with me: I kill, and I make alive; I wound, and I heal; neither is there any that can deliver out of my hand." Deut. xxxii. 39.

§ i. *Its distinguishing feature, a Theocracy.*

The term Theocracy is derived from two Greek words, signifying *God* and *government*. It is applied to the government of the Jews, because they had no king but God, and all their laws came immediately from Him. The Tabernacle, and afterwards the Temple, built of the richest materials, was considered as his palace, in which, in a peculiar sense, He manifested Himself as their King enthroned on the mercy-seat^a: and He performed towards them those acts which are usually performed by earthly sovereigns. For instance:

It was by the direct command of God that they were to declare war or peace. (Deut. i. 41, 42; Josh. x. 40; Judges i. 1, 2; 1 Kings xii. 24; Josh. ix. 14, 15.)

God appointed to each family that proportion of the Promised Land which it was to possess, varying perhaps from sixteen to twenty-five acres to each. This land they held, independent of all temporal superiors, by direct tenure from the Lord Jehovah, their Sovereign: by whose power they were to acquire their territory, and under whose protection only they could retain it. On this principle, the lands so distributed were inalienable. "The land shall not be sold for ever: for the land is mine [saith the Lord]: ye are strangers and sojourners with me." Lev. xxv. 23.

As to the *legislative* part of their government, God was

^a Exod. xxv. 8, 9; 1 Chron. xxix. 1; Psalm cxxxii. 5.

the author of their laws. No authority was vested in any one man, or body of men, or even in the whole nation assembled, to make new laws or alter old ones: their Almighty Sovereign reserved this power to Himself. Deut. iv. 1, 2; xii. 32.

As to the *executive* part of their government, the judges and kings were his viceroys, enjoying only a delegated authority, to which they were required constantly to refer: they were merely instruments employed by God to facilitate the regular administration of his extraordinary providence (Numb. xxvii. 15, &c.; Deut. xvii. 15); see also the circumstances of the appointment of Saul (1 Sam. ix. 16), and the cause of his rejection (ch. xv. 26—28).

It is obvious that such a form of government would be a continual proof, a constant appeal to their senses, that the gods of the heathen were no gods; but that the Lord God of Israel was God alone of all the kingdoms of the earth. See the prayer of Hezekiah, whose whole history, as recorded in the Bible, is a remarkable illustration of what is here said. 2 Kings xix. 15, &c.; Isa. x. 5, &c.

§ ii. *Their Laws.*

It must be remembered, as already hinted, that the laws given through Moses to the Jews were “in part a republication of antecedent revelations, and of commands long before given to mankind,” with such additions as were adapted to their peculiar circumstances. The laws thus forming the Jewish code are scattered over the books of Exodus, Leviticus, Numbers, and Deuteronomy. As an assistance to our better understanding them, they may be divided into three parts; moral, judicial, and ceremonial. The moral laws, the principles of which are laid down in the Ten Commandments, are of universal application; the judicial were intended to regulate the civil government of the Israelites; and the ceremonial, their religious worship.

It is a remarkable feature of these laws, that all their political institutions were made entirely subordinate to their religious; thus suggesting to the rulers of the world in every age, on what alone the prosperity of any nation really depends^b. Reliance on Providence, in the path of

^b Prov. xiv. 34.

obedience, was the foundation of their civil government, the spirit and the principle of their constitution. "The cautions, the warnings, the counsels of their lawgiver, are all directed to this single point—their *obedience to the great Jehovah*." (See Graves on the Pentateuch, Part iii. Lect. vii. p. 410.)

But the law of the Jews being in many respects so different from those to which we are accustomed, the following points should be observed, as showing, that amidst the minute details to which it descends (even to the colour of the fringes of their garments^c) may be traced the wisdom of its appointment, and the germ of those principles which were afterwards fully developed in the Gospel.

Observe, then, with reference to the Mosaic Law.

I. Its adaptation to the circumstances of those for whom it was made.

The wisdom of a law appears in its adaptation to the character and circumstances of those for whom it is made. The Jews, to whom this law was first addressed, were only just delivered from the most abject slavery. To the great ignorance necessarily consequent on such a state, was added, as their natural character, great stubbornness. They were "a stiff-necked," a "disobedient and gainsaying people^d," ever disposed to "walk in a way that was not good, after their own thoughts^e." The law that should govern such a people must have reference to such ignorance and such stubbornness. Such a people would require to be treated very much as children, to whom it is not enough to give a few general rules, but minute particulars must be specified, in order that, by repeated acts of obedience in these little things, habits of obedience may be formed, and at every step some restraint on disobedience imposed by a positive prohibition. This is evidently the view given by the Apostle, in the Epistle to the Galatians.

II. The moral object of its rites and ceremonies.

As such a people would require, like children, minute directions, so would they also require frequent appeals to their senses—a law abounding in rites and ceremonies, to fix their attention and affect their heart: and such was the Mosaic law. Of the moral object of those rites and cere-

^c Numb. xv. 38.

^e Isaiah lxx. 2.

^d Deut. xxxi. 27; Rom. x. 21.

monies more immediately affecting their religious worship, notice has been taken already in page 64: see also pages 167, &c. But the moral object of those regulating their conduct as members of society may also be easily shown. Thus the reason of the direction as to the ribbon to be put on the fringes of their garments^f, at once explains the moral object for which such a direction was given by God: "that ye may look upon it, and remember all the commandments of the Lord and do them." Being distinguished by dress from the heathen world around them, wherever they were, they would be reminded that they were a "holy people" to the Lord. Thus dressed, it was impossible they could join in any idolatrous festival without having all eyes drawn to them.

Again, as "evil communications corrupt good manners," the minute directions as to their food, what animals might or might not be eaten, &c., operated as a constant check on idolatry, by restraining their intercourse with their idolatrous neighbours. See Lev. xi., &c.

The eating of blood, so pointedly forbidden to the Jews^g, was very common in heathen feasts and sacrifices. It would thus appear that the Jews could scarcely ever eat and drink with the heathen, and thus one great snare to idolatry was removed; for, as has been well remarked, "intimate friendships are in most cases formed at table; and with the man with whom I can neither eat nor drink, let our intercourse in business be what it may, I shall seldom become so familiar as with him whose guest I am and he mine." See Dan. i. 8.

Besides these, there were many other prohibitions apparently given with the same object, namely, to keep them as far as possible from the religious practices of the heathen. Thus they were forbidden to sow their vineyard with divers seed^h, for it was an idolatrous rite to sow barley and dried grapes together. The prohibitions given in Lev. xix. 27, 28, refer to customs which we know from the testimony of profane authors (as Homer, &c.), as well as from Scriptureⁱ, were religious rites of the heathen. Honey was probably forbidden for the same reason, and seething the

^f Numb. xv. 38.

^g Lev. xix. 26.

^h Deut. xxii. 9.

ⁱ Jer. xvi. 6; 1 Kings xviii. 23.

kid in the mother's milk^k. The practical effect of their laws in keeping the Jews a distinct people is referred to in Esther iii. 8; and Acts xvi. 20, 21^l.

III. Its spirituality.

The Mosaic law regarded the thoughts, and not the outward conduct only; requiring obedience from an inward principle.

IV. Its principle.

It required the inward principle of love to God: this was the first and great commandment, on which all the law and the prophets hung^m; and the second was like unto it, "Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyselfⁿ." The poor, the widow, the fatherless, the stranger, were to be especially the objects of their regard^o. A precept was given to regulate the conduct of creditors towards debtors, beautifully illustrating how this law consulted the feelings as well as the wants of the needy. "When thou dost lend thy brother any thing, thou shalt not go into his house to fetch his pledge. Thou shalt stand abroad, and the man to whom thou dost lend shall bring out the pledge abroad unto thee^p." Though the Jews had been appointed by God to be in many instances the executioners of his justice in the punishment of the wicked^q, they were cautioned against indulging personal enmities. The tenor of the command given to punish the Canaanites taught the Jews (as Graves remarks) to regard with abhorrence, not so much the persons of idolaters as the crime of idolatry. Enemies were to be the objects of their kindness^r. They were particularly forbidden to abhor even an Egyptian, though the Egyptians abhorred them, and were the most cruel of their oppressors^s; and more than 800 years after

^k Exod. xxiii. 19.

^l Nor did these peculiarities escape the notice of heathen writers. Tacitus (*Historiarum lib. v. sect. 4*), remarking on the opposition of the rites of the Jews to those of the rest of mankind, says, "All things we hold sacred are there profane, and what we deem abominable are with them permitted:—they slaughter the ram in sacrifice, as if in contempt of Ammon; and they also offer up an ox, which the Egyptians worship under the name of Apis."—Graves on the Pentateuch:

^m Deut. vi. 5; xi. 13; xxx. 6.

^q Deut. ix. 4.

ⁿ Lev. xix. 18.

Lev. xviii. 25.

^o Deut. xxiv. 14. 17. 19.

^r Exod. xxiii. 4, 5.

^p Deut. xxiv. 10, 11.

^s Deut. xxiii. 7.

the giving of this law, the spirit of its observance was still kept before them: "Seek the peace of the city whither I have caused you to be carried away captives, and pray unto the Lord for it." Jer. xxix. 7. See also Prov. xx. 22; xxiv. 17; xxv. 21.

A merciful temper towards brutes was urged upon them with an anxiety and solemnity unparalleled in any code of laws, ancient or modern. It was one of the conditions on which they were to expect the Divine blessing on themselves in the land of promise. (Deut. xxv. 4; xxii. 7; see also Exod. xxiii. 11, 12.)

V. Its impartiality.

Again and again it is declared that "God is no respecter of persons^t." The idolatrous Hebrew city was to be given over to the same destruction as that denounced on the nations of Canaan. Deut. xiii. 12, &c.

As the love of God was the great principle every where enforced, so the want of this love, Moses forewarns them, would cause their rejection: thus, "I command thee this day to love the Lord thy God that thou mayest live and multiply but if thine heart turn away I denounce unto you this day that ye shall surely perish," &c. (Deut. xxx. 16, &c.; see also Deut. viii. 20.)

VI. Its subserviency to the Gospel.

It made no alteration in the mode of man's acceptance with God. We are informed that it was added, not to set aside the promise, but "because of transgressions^u." In the awful circumstances of its promulgation^v, and in the general severity of its enactments^w, it forcibly pointed out man's exposure to the wrath of God, and the insufficiency of any thing which he could do to atone for sin; and thus by deepening men's convictions of the evil of sin, it became a schoolmaster to lead them to Christ^x. Its perfection chiefly appears in its adaptation to this object; which being accomplished, like the morning star, it gradually disappeared before the rising light of the Sun of Righteousness. In order to understand this subject properly, the whole Epistle to the Hebrews should be carefully studied.

^t Deut. x. 17.

^u Gal. iii. 19.

^v Exod. xix. xx.

Heb. xii. 18—21.

^w Numb. ix. 9—13.

Lev. vii. 20, 21, &c.

^x Gal. iii. 24.

§ iii. *The Sabbatical Year, and the Jubilee, as illustrating their Government and Laws.*

I. *The Sabbatical Year.*

This was observed every seventh year under the following ordinances :

1. The ground was to remain uncultivated in every respect ; neither ploughing, sowing seed, planting, nor pruning the vineyard, &c., being permitted. What the ground produced of its own accord was to be devoted to charitable purposes^y. God, however, graciously promised, on their obedience to this command, so to bless the sixth year that it should yield fruit enough for three years^z. Thus, while the kind consideration of the stranger, the poor, the fatherless, and the widow was enforced, they were reminded that their land was his property, and that his providence, and not the fertility of the soil, was their security for its supplying them with food.

2. Debts were to be remitted. Deut. xv. 1, 2.

3. Hebrew slaves were to be set at liberty, unless they voluntarily chose to remain in servitude. Exod. xxi. 2.

4. The law was to be read publicly in the ears of the people ; and such a season of leisure from agricultural employments was peculiarly favourable for religious instruction. Deut. xxxi. 10—13.

II. *The Jubilee.*

This was held in every fiftieth year ; *i. e.* in the year after every seventh sabbatical year^a. This great sabbath of the Jubilee was to be kept as other sabbatical years. The ground was to remain uncultivated, &c. But the peculiar rite of the Jubilee, as distinguished from other sabbatical years, was this : every Hebrew slave was then set at liberty, and returned home : and such lands as had been sold or mortgaged returned to their first owners, no one having the power to alienate his property from his family beyond this period. “Ye shall hallow the fiftieth year, and proclaim liberty throughout all the land unto all the inhabitants thereof : it shall be a jubilee unto you ; and ye shall

^y Exod. xxiii. 11.

^z Lev. xxv. 2—21.

^a Lev. xxv. 8.

return every man unto his possession, and ye shall return every man unto his family^b." The Jubilee commenced with the sound of a trumpet on the evening of the Day of Atonement^c; a time, Bishop Patrick remarks, peculiarly well chosen, as the Jews would be the better disposed to forgive their brethren their debts, when they had been imploring pardon of God for their own transgressions.

The benefits of such an institution were many :

1. It was a check on oppression, and on the inordinate desire of "adding house to house, and field to field;" while it rescued every family from those peculiar temptations of abject poverty, which the misconduct of their ancestors might otherwise have entailed upon them.

2. It preserved their distinction of tribes; giving to each the strongest motive of interest to keep his genealogy, that he might prove his right to the inheritance of his forefathers.

3. By thus preserving the distinction of tribes, it was calculated to prepare for the promised coming of the Messiah, whom Jacob's prophecy, more than 1600 years before He came, had identified with the tribe of Judah. Gen. xlix. 10.

4. It was typical of the spiritual liberty to be introduced by the Gospel dispensation^d.

5. It was one of the many proofs of the Divine authority under which Moses acted. If a legislator had dared to demand such a surrender of property every fifty years, would a people in actual possession of their property have yielded it up, but under the fullest conviction that the demand rested on Divine authority? The same remark applies to the provisions of the Sabbatical Year. That a people whose characteristic was stubbornness, and who were so characterized by the very giver of the law^e, whose subsistence was derived from agriculture and pasturage, should have submitted, as Stillingfleet remarks, to laws apparently so contradictory to their interests, is a striking evidence and illustration of the miraculous Providence by which they were governed, and which formed the peculiar feature of their government as a Theocracy.

^b Lev. xxv. 10.

^c Lev. xxv. 9.

^d Isaiah lxi. 2, with Luke iv. 16—21.

^e Deut. ix. 6.

§ iv. *Evidences of the Divine Origin of the Mosaic Law, from the circumstances under which it was given.*

In the history of the world there is no parallel to the circumstances under which the Mosaic law was given. Bryant has expressed this very forcibly. "Laws," he says, "are generally made when people have been well settled; and they are founded upon many contingencies, which arise from the nature of the soil, the trade and produce of the country, and the temper, customs, and dispositions of the natives and their neighbours. But the laws of Moses were given in a desert, while the people were in a forlorn state, wandering from place to place, and encountering hunger and thirst, without seeing any ultimate end of their roving^f. These prescripts were designed for a religious polity, when the people should be at some particular period settled in Canaan; of which settlement human forecast could not see the least probability. For what hopes could a leader entertain of possessing a country from which he withdrew himself, and persisted in receding for so many years; and when, at a time an attempt was made to obtain some footing, nothing ensued but repulse and disappointment? Numb. xiv. 40. 45.

"Did any lawgiver ever give directions about corn, wine, and oil, in a country that was a stranger to tillage and cultivation; or talk of tithes and first-fruits where there was scarcely a blade of grass? It may be answered, that these ordinances were given with a view to Canaan. True; but Moses himself was not acquainted with Canaan, as is plain from the spies which were sent, and the orders they received^g; and if Providence were not his guide, there was little chance of his getting even a sight of it. He was in the midst of a wilderness, and so continued for near forty years; and in this place, and at this season, he gave directions about their towns and cities, and 'of the stranger within their gates,' while they were in a state of solitude under tents, and so likely to continue. He mentions their vineyards and olives before they had an inch of ground^h; and gives intimation about their future

^f Numb. xx. 2.

^g Numb. xiii. 18—20.

^h Deut. viii. 8.

kings when they were not constituted a nation. Deut. xxviii. 36.

“These good things they did at length enjoy, and in process of time they were under regal government. But how could Moses be apprized of it? Surely it could only be by inspiration. He must have been under the direction of a higher power, and his mission by Divine authority.”
—Bryant.

CHAPTER II.

THE PUBLIC WORSHIP OF THE JEWS.

CONTENTS.—§ i. *Its most important ceremonies.* § ii. *The persons who conducted it.* § iii. *The places where it was conducted.* § iv. *Its appointed seasons.*

As the leading object of this work is to direct the reader to the Scripture from which the subjects of this chapter are almost entirely derived, it has been thought desirable to put much of the information intended to be conveyed by it in a series of questions, for answer to which reference is generally made to passages in Scripture.

§ i. *The most important Ceremonies of Public Worship.*

Into what three classes may the Jewish offerings be divided?—A. 1. *Those in which an animal was killed.*
2. *Those taken from the vegetable kingdom (as ears of corn, parched grain, frankincense, meal, bread, cakes, &c.).*
3. *Drink-offerings, which were accompaniments to the other two.* (Exod. xxix. 40.)

Of these, which were the most important?—A. *Animal sacrifices.*

Among heathen nations the most acceptable offering was that of human sacrifices. Can you mention any passages of Scripture expressive of God's peculiar abhorrence of human sacrifices? (Deut. xii. 29—31; Jer. vii. 29—34.)

What animals were sacrificed? (Lev. i. 2; xiv. 22.)

What was particularly required with regard to them? (Lev. xxii. 20; 1 Pet. i. 19.)

What is there in the disposition of the sheep or lamb,

which made it a proper emblem of our Blessed Lord? (Matt. xi. 29; Isa. liii. 7; 2 Cor. x. 1.)

Is this the disposition you should cultivate? (1 Pet. ii. 21.)

What were the three kinds of animal sacrifice?—A. 1. *Whole burnt-offerings* (Lev. vi. 9). 2. *Trespass or sin-offerings, which did not differ materially from each other, and which were generally offered for sins committed, either through ignorance or against knowledge* (Lev. iv. 2—4. See also Lev. v. and vi. 1—7). 3. *Peace-offerings, in which prayer was made for mercies desired, or acknowledgment made for mercies received.* (Lev. iii. 1.)

What does the appointment of a sacrifice for doing wrong without knowing it show?—A. *That ignorance is not always an excuse for sin.*

Confirm this by some quotations from the New Testament. (Luke xii. 48; Acts iii. 17, with ii. 23; 1 Tim. i. 13.)

When does ignorance become sinful?—A. *When we had the opportunity of knowledge, but neglected it.*

What usually accompanied the sacrifices?—A. *The singing of psalms, and playing on instruments of music.* (Amos v. 23.)

[Some of the sacrifices were made on behalf of the nation at large. It appears from Numb. xxix. that there were every year sacrificed at the tabernacle (and temple), at the stated national charge, the following number of beasts: namely, 1101 lambs, 132 bullocks, 72 rams, 21 kids, 2 goats. These made up the morning and evening sacrifices. Besides these there were a vast number of voluntary or prescribed offerings of individuals. (Lev. xii. 1—8; Luke ii. 24; Lev. xiv. 2—7; Matt. viii. 4.)]

Where was it commanded that every sacrifice should be offered? (Lev. i. 3; Deut. xii. 5, &c.; 2 Chron. vii. 12.)

What benefit would arise from such a public and official superintendence of the offering?—A. *It would be a great check to idolatrous and unauthorized rites.*

Do we not read of Gideon, and Samuel, and David, and Elijah, building altars, and offering sacrifices in other places?—A. *Yes; but it was only allowed to be done by prophets and inspired men, or at God's express command.*

Where did Ahaz offer sacrifice, and how was he punished? (2 Chron. xxviii. 3—5.)

Show that God regarded not only the place, but the state of the heart in those who offered sacrifice.—(1 Sam. xv. 22; Ps. l. 8; Isa. i. 11; Jer. vii. 22, 23; the meaning of which latter passage is, that God always laid a greater stress on the state of the heart than on merely outward observances.)

[On the intention of animal sacrifice, and in what sense the blood of bulls and goats could take away sin, see p. 62, &c.]

Where there was not a right state of the heart, how does God speak of the sacrifices? (Prov. xv. 8.)

On the part of the offerer, what was meant by his putting his hands on the head of the victim?—A. *That he desired, by faith, to lay on it his iniquity.* (Lev. i. 4, &c.; xvi. 21; where Aaron represented the nation. Isa. liii. 6.)

On the part of the priest, what was meant by his sprinkling the blood on the altar, or bringing the blood into the tabernacle, and sprinkling it before the veil?—A. *That atonement was made for the sin of the offerer, and his pardon thereby sealed to him.* (Lev. xvii. 11; xvi. 14.)

[The particular forms of confession used here have been handed down to us by Jewish writers. “That,” remarks Archbishop Magee, “prescribed for the individual presenting his own sacrifice, seems particularly significant: ‘O God, I have sinned; I have done perversely; I have trespassed before thee; I have done [*so and so*]. Lo, now I repent, and am truly sorry for my misdeeds: let, then, this victim be my expiation:’—*i. e.* Let the evils which in justice should have fallen on my head, light upon the head of this victim.”—Vol. i. p. 369.]

How does John the Baptist speak of our Blessed Lord? (John i. 29.)

In what remarkable circumstance did the sacrifice of Christ differ from all those under the law?—A. *Our Blessed Lord was not only the Subject of the offering, but the Priest who offered it* (Heb. ix. 14): *thus, while by his sacrifice we are pardoned, by his continual intercession we are preserved.* (Heb. vii. 24, 25.)

Besides these offerings, the Jews had many ceremonies of purification, washing with water, &c. (Lev. xi.—xv.) What were these to represent to them?—A. *How much care the people of God should take to be separated and purified from every sin.*

In confirmation of this view of the spiritual intention of such ceremonies, can you mention any passages of Scripture in which the term "wash" is used in the spiritual sense of cleansing from sin? (Ps. li. 2. 7; Isa. i. 16; Jer. iv. 14; Acts xxii. 16; Heb. x. 22; Rev. i. 5.)

§ ii. *The Persons who conducted the Public Worship of the Jews—the tribe of Levi.*

Why did God thus honourably distinguish this tribe, to conduct the public worship of the Jews? (Deut. xxxiii. 8, 9.)

They had no inheritance in land: but whom were they commanded to consider as their inheritance? and what did God appoint for their support? (Numb. xviii. 20; xxxv. 7.)

Into what three ranks were they divided?—A. *The High-priest, the Priests, and the Levites.*

To what high office were Aaron and his sons consecrated? (Exod. xxviii.; Lev. viii.)

By what ceremony was their being solemnly set apart for that office especially marked? (Exod. xxx. 30; xl. 15.)

What did this represent?—A. *The influences of the Holy Spirit.* (Isa. lxi. 1; Acts x. 38; 1 John ii. 20. 27.)

Show that the priesthood was limited to Aaron's family^a. (Numb. iii. 10, &c.)

What was the peculiar office of the high-priest?—A. *To exercise a general oversight over the public worship, and to perform the most sacred parts of Divine Service.* (Lev. xvi.)

^a Before Aaron's appointment, the priests appear to have been chosen from the first-born of all the tribes. Exod. xix. 22; xxiv. 5. (See Bp. Pearson on the Creed, Art. ii.) The first express appointment of Aaron and his sons to the priesthood occurs in the xxviiith chapter of Exodus; and it is at once a proof (1) of the disinterestedness of Moses, in leaving his own family in the rank of common Levites; and (2) of the Divine direction under which he acted. Moses limited the priest's office to the family of Aaron, so as to render it death for any other to take that office; yet made no provision for what, humanly speaking, was a very probable contingency, namely, Aaron's family becoming extinct. The whole system of religious worship was thus endangered, especially when Nadab and Abihu, two of the four sons of Aaron, had been struck dead for offering strange fire. Why should one so wise, so evidently provident of the future, have so acted, but that he was divinely assured Aaron's family would not be extinct till the Messiah, whom it typified, should appear?—See Graves on the Pentateuch.

Show that, after the death of Moses, the high-priest was the great medium of communication between God and the people. (Numb. xxvii. 21.)

By what means was this communication principally kept up?—A. *By Urim and Thummim.* (See page 111.)

Can you mention any instance of David, or others, thus consulting God? (1 Sam. xxx. 6—8.)—Also of Joshua, or others, acting wrong from omitting thus to consult God? (Josh. ix. 8—14.)

When David consulted God in this appointed manner, he was an inspired writer of holy Scripture (see when Ps. lvi. lvii. lix. cxlii. &c., were written), yet the Lord spake to him by the high-priest. What may we learn from this?—A. *The honour God puts upon his institutions, and the diligence and reverence with which we should use them.*

The high-priest was distinguished by a peculiarly rich and glorious dress, which he wore on particular occasions. Give some account of it, particularly of the breastplate (Exod. xxviii. 15—21. 29; xxxix. 14), and the mitre (Exod. xxviii. 36).

Who is our great High-priest, what is his office, and what encouragement may we derive from a consideration of it? (Heb. vii. 25; iv. 14—16.)

What was the peculiar office of the priests? (Lev. iv. 20; Numb. vi. 23—27.)

Of what were the garments made in which the priests officiated? (Exod. xxxix. 27.)

What was meant by this?—A. *That the priests should be clothed with righteousness.* (Ps. cxxxii. 9; Rev. xix. 8.)

Repeat the form of blessing which the Lord instructed the priest to use. (Numb. vi. 24—26.)

To what great doctrine, more fully revealed in the New Testament, does the repetition of the name Jehovah three times in these three verses seem to point?—A. *To the doctrine of the Trinity.*

In confirmation of this, compare it with the Apostolic benediction. (2 Cor. xiii. 14.)

[Refer to 1 Chron. xxiii. 13; 2 Chron. xiii. 10, 11; as further descriptive of the priests' office.]

What was represented by the burning of incense, the smoke of which rose up with a pleasant smell?—A. *Acceptable prayer.* (Ps. cxli. 2; Luke i. 10; Rev. v. 8.)

Through whose intercession must our prayers be ever offered? (John xiv. 6. 13; Rom. viii. 34; Ephes. v. 2; Rev. viii. 3, 4.)

When not engaged in acts of public worship, how were the priests employed?—A. *In expounding the law, and in assisting to judge, in civil as well as religious matters.*

Who were the chief priests mentioned in Matt. ii. 4?—A. *The high-priest at the time, his deputies, those who had held the office, and also all the heads of the twenty-four courses or families of the priests spoken of in 1 Chron. xxiv. 3—19.*

Give an instance of a high-priest or priest being punished for neglect of duty. (1 Sam. iv. 17, 18; Lev. x.)

Of what sin was Urijah guilty, who was a priest in the time of Ahaz? (2 Kings xvi. 11—16. See John xii. 43.)

Give instances of persons being punished for usurping the office of the priests.—A. *Uzziah* (2 Chron. xxvi. 18), and *Korah the Levite*. (Numb. xvi.)

Who were the *Levites*?—A. *All the tribe of Levi, not of the family of Aaron.*

Were they permitted to make atonement by offering sacrifice or burning incense?—A. *No; this was the duty of the priests alone.*

What then was the office of the Levites? (Numb. iii. 6—8; 1 Chron. xxiii. 28, &c.; 2 Chron. xiii. 10.)

In the time of Moses, into what three families were they divided? (Numb. iii. 17.)

Why were the more sacred parts of the tabernacle committed, in the journey of the Israelites, to the Kohathites? (Numb. iii.)—A. *Probably because they were most nearly related to the family of Aaron.*

In the time of David, who re-arranged them, how many were fit for service?—A. 38,000.

How were they divided? (1 Chron. xxiii. 3—5.)

How many were appointed to praise the Lord on instruments of music? (1 Chron. xxiii. 5.)

Whom had the Levites as assistants? (Ezra viii. 20.)

[Many of the Psalms appear to have been composed for the use of the Levites in public worship. (1 Chron. xvi. 7.) See also Neh. ix. 5, &c., where we find a prayer of the Levites, one of the finest in the Old Testament.]

The descendants of Levi being thus set apart for the public worship of the Jews, and deriving their maintenance

from a source which would necessarily fail if that worship were neglected, were deeply interested in its support. Their cities being dispersed through all the tribes, and their families permitted to intermarry with all; being exclusively possessed of the high-priesthood, as well as of other religious offices, and associated with the high-priest and judge in the supreme court of judicature, and with the elders of every city in the inferior tribunals; they must have acquired such influence and reverence among the people, as was calculated to answer the purpose of their institution—to preserve and consolidate the union of all the other tribes; to instruct the Jews in knowledge, virtue, and piety; “to teach Jacob the judgments, and Israel the law of Jehovah; that they might hear, and fear, and learn to obey the will of their Sovereign and their God.” (Deut. xxxiii. 8—10.) See Graves on the Pentateuch.

§ iii. *The Places of Public Worship among the Jews.*

I. *The Tabernacle.*

For what purpose especially did God command the Tabernacle to be built? (Exod. xxv. 8. See Deut. xii. 5.)

What pattern did Moses follow in making the Tabernacle, &c.? (Exod. xxv. 9; Heb. viii. 5.)

With what feelings did David look forward to attendance at the Tabernacle? (Ps. xliii. 4; xlii. lxxxiv.)

In what respect especially did the Tabernacle differ from the Temple afterwards built?—A. *It was moveable.* (Ps. lxxviii. 60; 1 Kings viii. 13.)

Into what two parts was it divided? and by what? (Exod. xxvi. 31, &c.; Heb. ix. 6, 7.)

What happened to this at the crucifixion of our Lord? (Luke xxiii. 45.)

What was implied by this miracle? (Heb. ix. 8, with x. 19.)

There were many holy things made of gold, silver, brass, wood; mention some of these in the court of the Tabernacle, and their use. (Exod. xxx. 18—21; xxvii. 1—5; Lev. vi. 13.)

Where did the altar of burnt-offerings stand? (2 Chron. viii. 12. See also Joel ii. 17.)

Mention some in the Holy Place, and their use. (Exod.

xxx. 1, &c.; xxv. 31; xxvii. 20; xxv. 23—30; Lev. xxiv. 5—9.)

Where was the golden altar placed? (Exod. xxx. 6.)

What was the most remarkable thing in the Holy of Holies? (Exod. xxv. 10.)

What was the Ark in an especial manner considered?

—A. *As the symbol of the presence of God.*

Show this by some reference to Scripture. (Ps. lxxviii. 60, 61.)

Describe it. (Exod. xxv. 10—16.)

What did it contain? (Deut. x. 1—5; Heb. ix. 4, 5.)

What was the lid of the Ark called? (Exod. xxv. 21.)

Describe it. (Exod. xxv. 17—21.)

What appeared over it as a symbol of God's presence? (Lev. xvi. 2.)

Give some instances of the honour which was attached to the Ark. (Numb. x. 33, &c.; Josh. iii. 6; vi. 6; 1 Sam. v. 2, &c.)

What happened in the time of Eli, when, instead of endeavouring to secure God's favour, by obedience to his law, the people rested their hope of success on the presence of the Ark in the field of battle? (1 Sam. iv.; Ps. lxxviii. 59—61.)

Why was Uzzah smitten with death? (2 Sam. vi. 6, 7.)

—A. *For not attending to the directions which God had given respecting the Ark.* (Numb. iv. 15—20.)

What promise of his spiritual presence has our Lord given to those who assemble together in his name? (Matt. xviii. 20.) See also Rev. xxi. 3, 4; vii. 16, 17; John xvii. 22—24, as to the glory yet awaiting the Church.

II. *The Temple.*

Who first expressed a desire to build the Temple? (2 Sam. vii. 2.)

Was he permitted to build it? Relate the circumstances. (2 Sam. vii.; 1 Chron. xvii.)

What preparation did he nevertheless make? (1 Chron. xxii.—xxix.)

Who gave David the pattern of the Temple? (1 Chron. xxviii. 12.)

By whom, and at what place, was the Temple built? (2 Chron. iii. 1.)

What very remarkable circumstance attended the building of it? (1 Kings vi. 7.)

Show from the prayer at the dedication the spiritual nature of the service therein to be conducted, and that it was to be not merely a place for the offering of external rites, but a house of prayer. (1 Kings viii. 29.)

What special promises were made to those who should confess their sins at the Temple? (2 Chron. vii. 14—16, compared with Jonah ii. 4.)

How was Solomon's Prayer answered? (2 Chron. vii. 1—4.)

In Solomon's letter to Hiram, what does he say was his reason for building the Temple? (2 Chron. ii. 3—6.)

What kings of Judah burnt incense elsewhere, and to other gods? (1 Kings xi. 8; 2 Chron. xxviii. 3. 24; 2 Kings xxiii. 5; Jer. xix. 13.)

With what was the whole house overlaid? (1 Kings vi. 21.) [Dean Prideaux values the gold with which the Holy of Holies alone was overlaid at £4,320,000.]

How long did it preserve its glory?—A. *Only about thirty-four years.* (1 Kings xiv. 25, 26.)

When, and by whom was it burnt? (Jer. liii. 12, 13; 2 Chron. xxxvi. 19; 2 Kings xxv. 8, 9.)

Was it rebuilt? Give some account of this, as related in the book of Ezra^b. (Ezra iii. 10, &c.)

Who spent forty-six years in improving it, and what was his character?—A. *Herod the Great.* (John ii. 20; Matt. ii. 16.)

How many people would its courts then contain?—A. 500,000.

What became of this Temple, as foretold by our Lord? (Matt. xxiv. 1, &c.)

What is the Christian Temple?—A. *The Church.* (Eph. ii. 21. See also Heb. ix. 11; xii. 22—24.)

Can you mention any passage in the New Testament in which individual Christians are compared to temples? (1 Cor. vi. 19.)

^b Of those things in the Temple of Solomon which were wanting in that of Zerubbabel, the following may be mentioned. The ark of the covenant, wherein were put the two tables of the law, with the pot of manna, and Aaron's rod that budded; the Urim and Thummim; the cloud of Shekinah, which was a type of the Divine presence; the spirit of prophecy; and the anointing oil.—BEAUSOBRE.

If we defile our bodies by sin, what have we reason to fear will be the consequence ? (1 Cor. iii. 17.)

Synagogues.

The word *synagogue* is rarely found in the Old Testament ; yet it does not seem possible, as Lightfoot has remarked, that the Jews could keep the Sabbath according to the injunction laid upon them, of having a holy meeting or convocation every seventh day^c, if they had not, at all times, their synagogue meetings, or particular congregations ; and this seems to be intimated by the frequent use of the plural number in speaking of assemblies or congregations. Ps. xxvi. 12 ; lxviii. 26, &c. See also Ps. lxxiv. 8. There were 480 synagogues in Jerusalem in the time of our Lord.

§ iv. *The Seasons of Public Worship.*

The chief of these were the daily Sacrifices ; the weekly Sabbaths ; the monthly feasts of the New Moon ; and the following yearly Feasts :—The Feast of the Passover, the Feast of Pentecost, the Feast of Trumpets, the Great Day of Atonement, and the Feast of Tabernacles.

I. *The Daily Sacrifices.*

What was offered day by day continually on the brazen altar ? (Exod. xxix. 38, &c.)

What was also daily offered on the golden altar ? (Exod. xxx. 7.)

How were the people then engaged ? (Luke i. 10 ; Ps. cxli. 2.)

II. *The Weekly Sabbath.*

When was the Sabbath first appointed to man ? (Gen. ii. 2, 3.)

Were the Jews reminded of the duty of its observance before the giving of the Fourth Commandment, and on what occasion ? (Exod. xvi. 22—26.)

How were the Jews reminded of the antiquity of its institution in the Fourth Commandment^d?—A. *By its*

^c Lev. xxiii. 3, 4.

^d The restoring and ascertaining the Sabbath was the first point of

being spoken of as an ESTABLISHED festival, and by the reference made to God's having hallowed the seventh day at the creation of the world.

What additional sacrifices were offered on that day, morning and evening? (Numb. xxviii. 9, 10.)

Was there any assembly of the people for public worship? (Lev. xxiii. 3.)

Mention some passages, by which it may be shown that it was a spiritual service which was required of them. (Isa. lviii. 13, 14; Ps. xcii., the title of which is remarkable.)

What punishment was threatened for its neglect? (Exod. xxxi. 14.)

Is there any instance of this threat being executed? (Numb. xv. 35.)

In enumerating the sins of the Jews, what did their rulers and prophets say in a peculiar manner brought upon them God's displeasure? (Neh. xiii. 18; Jer. xvii. 27; Ezek. xx. 24.)

What account have we of the Lord's observance of the Sabbath? (Mark i. 21; Luke iv. 16. 31; xiii. 10.)

III. *The Feast of the New Moon.*

From what were the Jewish months originally calculated?—A. *The first appearance of the New Moon.*

Give an account of the Feast; how it was proclaimed, and what sacrifices were offered. (Numb. x. 10; xxviii. 11; 1 Sam. xx. 5; Ps. lxxxix. 3.)

We have an account of Saul observing this solemn festival; but what was the state of his mind at the time? (1 Sam. xx. 5. 24; 2 Tim. iii. 5.)

The months of the Jewish year were, Nisan or Abib, Ijar or Zif, Sivan, Thammuz, Ab, Elul, Tisri, Marchesvan, Kisleu or Chisleu, Thebeth, Sebat, Adar. The Jews had two principal modes of arranging them, termed the *civil* and *ecclesiastical* years.

The first month of their *civil* year was Tisri, corresponding with the latter part of September and the beginning of October; the second month, Marchesvan, &c.; the last Elul. From this year they reckoned their Jubilee, dated

religion that was settled after the children of Israel came out of Egypt, as being of the greatest moment; and this in relation to the original institution, for the law at Mount Sinai was not then given.—J. TAYLOR.

all their contracts, noted the birth of their children and the reigns of their kings.

The first month of their *ecclesiastical* year was Nisan or Abib, answering to the latter part of March and the beginning of April. From that month they computed their feasts, because at that time their wonderful deliverance from Egypt was effected.

The first chapter of Nehemiah affords an illustration of the importance of a knowledge of the names and order of these months: for instance,

In what month did Nehemiah begin to entreat God on behalf of Jerusalem, and how many months passed before his prayer was answered? (Neh. i. 1; ii. 1.)

What does this teach us? (Luke xviii. 1; Lam. iii. 26.)

IV. *Yearly Feasts.*

PASSOVER. When was it instituted, and how was it observed? (Exod. xii.)

What means did God appoint for the preservation of the Israelites from the destruction which He inflicted on the first-born of Egypt? (Exod. xii. 7. 13.)

In what respect did the sacrifice then offered differ from all others?—A. *No part was burnt on the altar.*

Show that their observance of this feast was eminently calculated to promote family religion. (Exod. xii. 3. 21. 26.)

Were there many victims then offered?—A. *Josephus gives an account of a passover where there were 256,500 victims offered, reckoning each household to consist of from 10 to 15 persons.*

Give some account of the passover celebrated by Joshua (Josh. v.); Hezekiah (2 Chron. xxx.); and Josiah (2 Chron. xxxv.).

What sacrament did our Lord institute at his last celebration of the passover? (Matt. xxvi.)

Mention some passages of the New Testament which show the typical reference of this feast to Christ. (John xix. 36, &c.; 1 Cor. v. 7.)

PENTECOST. Why is it so called?—A. *In the Greek, Pentecost means fiftieth; and this feast was observed fifty days after that of the Passover. It was called also the Feast of Weeks* (Exod. xxxiv. 22; Deut. xvi. 10. 16),

because kept a week of weeks after the first day of unleavened bread.

Why was it kept?—A. *As a thanksgiving for the beginning of wheat harvest; and hence it was called the Feast of Harvest and the Day of First-Fruits.* (Exod. xxiii. 16; Numb. xxviii. 26.)

What may we learn from this institution?—A. *The duty of expressing gratitude to God for common mercies.*

What great event (which may be considered as the ingathering of the first-fruits of the Christian Church) happened on that day? (Acts ii. 1.)

FEAST OF TRUMPETS. What was this feast?—A. *On the first day of the seventh month, the blowing of Trumpets was appointed with peculiar sacrifices.* (Lev. xxiii. 24, &c.; Numb. xxix. 1.)

Refer to the book of Nehemiah for an instance of the celebration of this feast after the return of the Jews from the Babylonian captivity. (viii. 2.)

What are supposed to be the two chief designs of this feast?

A. 1. *The seventh month, Tisri, having more holy days in it than any other of the year, might be considered as a sort of Sabbath of months, and was on that account to be begun with an extraordinary sound of trumpets.*

2. *Tisri being the first month of the civil year, this feast, held on the New-year's day of that year, would thus remind the Jews of the duty of conducting all the worldly employments of the year in the fear of God and to his glory.*

What may we learn from such an institution?—A. *To begin every year with self-examination as to the past, and renewed dedication of ourselves to God's service for the future.*

To what was this feast introductory?—A. *The day of Atonement.*

DAY OF ATONEMENT. What was the great day of Atonement?—A. *The tenth day of the seventh month was appointed as a day of public fasting and humiliation, on which the nation were to afflict their souls on account of their sins, and seek atonement for them.* (Lev. xxiii. 27; xvi. 29; Numb. xxix. 7.)

What did Aaron intend when he laid both his hands on the head of the scape-goat? (Lev. xvi. 21.)

What was that goat said to bear? (Lev. xvi. 22.)

What did the sin-offering of the goat shadow forth?

—A. *The sacrifice of the death of Christ.*

What did the scape-goat represent?—A. *The pardon of sin procured by that sacrifice.* (Gal. iii. 13; 2 Cor. v. 21.)

What part of the tabernacle was it, into which the high-priest alone might enter, and he only on the great day of atonement?—A. *The Holy of Holies.*

What was shadowed forth by the high-priest's entering the Holy of Holies with incense, and sprinkling the mercy-seat with the blood of the sacrifice? (Heb. ix. 24—28; vii. 25.)

Show how much greater are our privileges than those of the Jews, and the use we should make of them. (Heb. ix.; x. 19, &c.)

FEAST OF TABERNACLES. What was the Feast of Tabernacles?—A. *On the fifteenth day of the seventh month, at the end of all their harvest, they began this feast, called also the Feast of Ingathering* (Exod. xxiii. 16), *and dwelt seven days in booths made of the boughs of trees.* (Deut. xvi. 13.)

Why was it kept?—A. *In memory of their dwelling in booths or tents in the wilderness.* (Lev. xxiii. 39—44.)

How was it kept? (Numb. xxix. 12, &c.; Ezra iii. 4; Neh. viii. 14—18.)

What may we learn from its institution?—A. *The duty of cherishing a grateful remembrance of God's past mercies to us and our forefathers.*

The last day was the great day of this feast; what did Jesus on that day? (John vii. 37.)

At what hour did their Sabbaths and all their feasts begin and end?—A. *The Jews counted their days, and particularly their holy days, from one evening or sun-set to the next evening.* (Gen. i. 5; Lev. xxiii. 5. 32.)

At what places were the feasts to be kept? (Deut. xvi. 16.)

Who violated this law, by setting up calves at Dan and Bethel, and what was the consequence to himself and to the ten tribes? (1 Kings xii. 32; xiii. 32; 2 Kings xvii. 21—23.)

What remarkable promise was given to those who, in obedience to the command of God, should leave their homes

to attend at the three great annual festivals of the Passover, Pentecost, and Tabernacles? (Exod. xxxiv. 24.)

What argument may be drawn from this command, and from its being so often obeyed with perfect safety by those who were surrounded by the bitterest enemies?—A. *That the Jews were governed by a miraculous Providence, and that Moses wrote and acted under the inspiration of God.*

The Jews in later times had other festivals, not of Divine appointment, of which the two principal were the Feast of Purim, or Lots, and the Feast of the Dedication.

The *Purim* was in commemoration of their deliverance, by the Providence of God, from the utter extermination which Haman had designed. For this he had actually procured an edict from the Persian king Ahasuerus, then monarch of the world. See short account of the Book of Esther.

The Feast of *Dedication* was instituted by Judas Maccabeus, about A. M. 3840, as a grateful memorial of the renewed dedication of the Temple to the service of God, after it had been profaned by Antiochus Epiphanes^e. Our Lord's attendance on this feast justifies the observance of religious seasons of human appointment. (John x. 22.)

Other solemn seasons are alluded to, as in Zech. vii. 5; viii. 19; but since the observance of them is not particularly mentioned in Scripture, they are not here noticed.

The following remark is well worthy of attention, in connexion with the subjects which have occupied the two preceding chapters.

“If in parts of the Jewish law we should meet with some directions, the utility of which should not be at first sight apparent to us, let us beware of setting up the conclusions of our own reason against the unbounded wisdom of God. A closer consideration of the subject will teach us humbly to acknowledge, that all these institutions answered the purpose of exercising the Israelites in faith and obedience; of preserving them a distinct and separate people; and of training them, by a peculiar mode of discipline, wisely suited to their habits, prejudices, and circumstances, for the reception of the New Dispensation under the Messiah.”

^e 1 Mac. iv. 52—59.

JEWISH MONTHS.	Answering to the Months of	Sacred Year.	Civil Year.	Seasons.	FESTIVALS.
ABIB, or NISAN, 30 days. Ex. xii. 2; xiii. 4. Ezra vii. 9. Neh. ii. 1. Esther iii. 7.	Part of March and April.	1st	7th		14, The Paschal Lamb killed. The Passover. 16, The first-fruits of the barley harvest presented at the temple.
IJAR, or ZIF, 29 days. 1 Kings vi. 1. 2 Chron. xxx. 15.	Part of April and May.	2nd	8th		14, The second Passover (Num. ix. 10, 11), in favour of those who could not celebrate it in the last month.
SIVAN, or SIUVAN, 30 days. Esth. viii. 9.	Part of May and June.	3rd	9th	Summer	6, Pentecost, or feast of weeks. First-fruits of wheat harvest presented (Lev. xxiii. 17, 20); and first-fruits of all the earth (Dent. xxvi. 2, 10, 16. 1 Kings xii. 25—33. Jeroboam).
THAMMUZ, or TAMMUZ, 29 days.	Part of June and July.	4th	10th		
AB, 30 days. Ezra vii. 9.	Part of July and August.	5th	11th	Hot Season.	9, Temple taken first by the Chaldeans, afterwards by the Romans.
ELUL, 29 days. Neh. vi. 15.	Part of August and September.	6th	12th		
TISRI, or ETHANIM, 30 days. 1 Kings viii. 2. 2 Chron. v. 3.	Part of September and October.	7th	1st	Seed time.	1, Feast of Trumpets (Lev. xxiii. 24, 25. Num. xxix. 1). 10, Day of Atonement (Lev. xxiii. 27, 28; xvi. 29, 30). 15, Feast of Tabernacles (Lev. xxiii. 34). First-fruits of wine and oil (Lev. xxiii. 39).
MARCHESVAN, or BUL, 29 days. 1 Kings vi. 38.	Part of October and November.	8th	2nd		
CHISLEU, or KISLEU, 30 days. Zech. vii. 1. Neh. i. 1. Hag. ii. 18.	Part of November & December.	9th	3rd	Winter.	25, Feast of Dedication (John x. 22, 23. 1 Macc. iv. 52—59).
TREBETH, or TEBETH, 29 days. Esther ii. 16. 2 Kings xxv.	Part of December & January.	10th	4th		
SEBAT, SHEVET, or SHEBAT, 30 days. Zech. i. 7.	Part of January and February.	11th	5th	Cold Season.	
ADAR, 29 days. Ezra vi. 15. Esth. iii. 7; ix. 21.	Part of February & March.	12th	6th		14, 15, Feast of Purim.
VE-ADAR comes in here when an additional month is wanted.					

NOTE.—An illustration of the practical value of this calendar occurs in 2 Chron. xxx. 23. The Passover was then kept on the 14th day of the *second* month; a deviation which, under all circumstances, Hezekiah was justified in making. (See Num. ix. 10, 11.) But a reference to the calendar enables us more fully to appreciate the zeal of the people, as expressed 2 Chron. xxx. 23. For from it we learn that this was the

WEATHER AND PRODUCTIONS.

Rain, called the latter rain (Deut. xi. 14. Joel ii. 23. Zech. x. 1), begins to fall. The weather, during the fall of the early and latter rains, always chilly (Ezra x. 9. 13. John xviii. 18).

This rain prepared for the harvest, and made the grain swell.

Great heat, especially in the plains of Jericho.

The rivers swell, from the rains and thawing of the snow (1 Chron. xii. 15. Josh. iii. 15. Jer. xii. 5).

Barley ripe at Jericho, though but little of the wheat in ear. The fig-tree blossoms, even while the winter fig is on the tree (Matt. xxi. 19. Mark xi. 13).

The latter or spring rains frequent at the commencement.

Harvest depends on the duration of the rainy season, consequently greatly desired (Deut. xi. 14. Job xxix. 23. Jer. v. 24. Joel ii. 23). These rains often preceded by whirlwinds (1 Kings xviii. 45. Matt. viii. 24, &c.).

Barley generally cut this month (Ruth i. 22; ii. 23). Wheat begins to ripen.

Excessive drought. From the middle of April to the middle of September it neither rains nor thunders (Prov. xxvi. 1. 1 Sam. xii. 17).

The morning cloud is seen early in the morning, but disappears as the sun ascends above the horizon (Hos. vi. 4; xiii. 3).

During the night copious dews (Job xxix. 19. Ps. cxxxiii. 3. Hos. xiv. 5).

North and east winds increase drought (Gen. xli. 6. Ezek. xvii. 10. Jonah iv. 8. Ps. ciii. 15, 16). Grass in some places above a yard high (John vi. 10).

Heat increases. Inhabitants pass the nights on the house-tops in the open air.

Vintage. (Lev. xxvi. 5.) Rice and early figs ripen.

Heat intense, though less so at Jerusalem than in the plain of Jericho.

Lebanon nearly free from snow.

Heat still intense (2 Kings iv. 19, 20. Ps. cxxi. 6. Isa. xlix. 9, 10. Rev. vii. 16).

Ripe figs at Jerusalem, ripe olives near Jericho.

Grapes ripe, clusters very large (Num. xiii. 23).

Heat in the day, the nights cold and frosty (Gen. xxxi. 40).

Frequent showers towards the close.

Begin to plough and to sow.

Sometimes the rainy season, called the former or early autumnal rain, does not commence till this month (James v. 7).

Wheat and barley sown. The latter grapes gathered.

Trees lose their foliage.

Towards the close the weather becomes cooler; snow begins to fall upon the mountains (Jer. xxxvi. 22).

As the season advances the cold becomes severe, especially in the mountainous parts, so that persons have perished from cold; travelling dangerous and slippery in steep mountain paths (Jer. xiii. 16; xxiii. 12. Matt. xxiv. 20).

In the plain of Jericho the cold scarcely felt.

Hailstones which fall during the severity of the winter season sometimes as large as walnuts (Josh. x. 11. Ps. cxlvii. 17. Ezek. xlii. 11).

Snow falls in flakes equally large (Ps. cxlvii. 16).

There are intervals, even in the depth of winter, when it is almost hot; at such seasons the inhabitants sit under the walls and porches of their dwellings, in the open air (Ezek. xxxiii. 30, 31). Grass and herbs spring up after the rains.

Corn is still sown. The winter fig still found on the trees, though they are stripped of leaves.

At the commencement of the cold season, the weather cold, but gradually becomes warm, and even hot, particularly in the plain of Jericho.

Thunder, lightning, and hail frequent.

Vegetable nature revives. Almond-tree blossoms.

Barley sometimes sown at Aleppo till the middle of this month.

time of harvest. The whole assembly, therefore (many of whom were far from home), taking counsel to keep other seven days, shows "how their hearts were enlarged" with holy affection; that they were neither weary of the service of God's house, nor in haste to return to their worldly business, though so strong a temptation was presented to them to do so.

CHAPTER III.

JEWISH SECTS;

WITH NOTICE OF SOME OTHER ORDERS OF MEN
MENTIONED IN SCRIPTURE.

CONTENTS.—§ i. *Scribes, Lawyers, Doctors of the Law.* § ii. *Pharisees.* § iii. *Sadducees.* § iv. *Essenes.* § v. *Nazarites.* § vi. *Herodians.* § vii. *Galileans.* § viii. *Publicans.* § ix. *Proselytes.* § x. *Samaritans.* § xi. *Epicureans and Stoics.*

WHILE there was a Divine Oracle in the Temple, and while there were prophets, that is, men inspired by God to reveal and explain his will, there were no sects amongst the Jews. But when, upon the death of Malachi, the spirit of prophecy ceased, and the law of God began to be explained by weak and fallible men, then divisions took place, and sects began to be formed.

“The whole body of the Jewish nation,” remarks Beausobre, “may be divided into two general sects; the Karaites and the Rabbinists. The Karaites are those that adhere to the plain and literal sense of the Holy Scripture, rejecting all manner of tradition as of Divine authority. The Rabbinists, otherwise called the Cabalists, or Talmudists, are those, on the contrary, who own and receive the oral or traditionary law as Divine.”

The chief source of all the Jewish sects was the difference of opinion as to the oral or traditionary law, which some persons held to be of equal authority with the written law of Moses. They supposed that this traditionary law had been handed down from Moses; that he received it from God while on Mount Sinai; and that by the tradition of the elders, or great national council which he established, it had descended to every succeeding generation^a.

^a These traditions were, about the second century after Christ, reduced to writing called the Mishna. Comments were made upon it, which were called Gemara. The Mishna and Gemara, that is, the text and its comment together, made what is called the Talmud. The Targums are paraphrases or expositions of different parts of the Old Testament, written in Chaldee, which, after the Babylonish captivity, was the language more familiar to the Jews, than the ancient

§ i. *Scribes, Lawyers, Doctors of the Law.*

These three titles appear to have been, in the time of our Lord, only different names for one class of persons. Those whom St. Luke^b calls Doctors of the Law he soon afterwards^c calls Scribes: and he whom St. Matthew^d calls a Lawyer, is spoken of by St. Mark^e as one of the Scribes. Probably the origin of all sects was from the Scribes, who were not themselves a distinct sect, but their original employment being that of copying the Law, they gradually became expounders also, and, differing from each other, drew away disciples after them. It was in order to give weight to their various interpretations of the Law that they attempted to show, first, that those interpretations were founded on tradition; and then, as the next step, that that tradition was of Divine appointment. It was their gross perversion of the written word of God, by additions, corruptions, and misinterpretations, which contributed so much to the blindness of the Jews in rejecting their Messiah. They had been taught by these Scribes, sitting in Moses' seat, to expect Him as a temporal prince; and therefore when He asserted that his kingdom was not of this world, they sought to slay Him. John xviii. 36.

§ ii. *The Pharisees.*

These persons formed the most numerous and important sect of the Jews. They derived their name from a Hebrew word, *Pharash*, which signifies 'separated,' or 'set apart,' because they separated themselves from every other sect, as more holy in their religious observances^f. They believed in the existence of angels and spirits, and in the resurrection of the dead; but the distinguishing feature of their belief was their observance of the traditions of the elders.

Among these traditions the following may be noticed.

Hebrew. Of these Targums, there are ten extant, of which those of Onkelos, who wrote on the books of Moses, and Jonathan Ben Uzziel, who wrote on the greater and lesser prophets, are most esteemed by the Jews. That of Onkelos is supposed to be contemporary with our Lord.

^b Luke v. 17.

^e Mark xii. 23.

^c Luke v. 21.

^f Acts xxvi. 5.

^d Matt. xxii. 35.

They washed their hands before and after meat^s; and not only did they consider this to be a religious duty, but looked upon its omission as a crime equal to fornication, and punishable by excommunication: "he that taketh meat with unwashen hands," says one of the rabbis, "is worthy of death." Again, if a son made a formal devotion to sacred purposes of those goods which he could afford for the relief of a parent, they considered him as exempt from the duty of succouring his parent; thus encouraging a direct violation of the fifth Commandment, and in so doing, destroying morality at its very source. The effect produced on their character by thus rendering the word of God of none effect through their traditions, was a disregard of the weightier matters of the law, justice and mercy; and an allowance of hypocrisy, covetousness, self-righteousness, and contempt of others. Luke xviii. 9.

They were the bitterest enemies of our Lord, and more hopeless of amendment, as He declared, than harlots, though they fasted frequently, prayed much, and paid tithes, even of the smallest herbs. Matt. xxi. 31.

How defective does this prove those motives to be, which, like theirs, regard the praise of man more than the praise of God! how defective that righteousness which, though abounding in outward duties, fails to control the heart! How self-deceived are the self-righteous! By careful study of their character, as given in the Gospels and Acts, much of the mystery of the iniquity of the human heart is discovered to us. (Matt. ix. xv. xvi. xix. xxiii.; Mark x.; Luke v. vii. xi. xiv. xv. xvi. xvii.; John vii. 32; ix. 15; xi. 47; xii. 19.)

§ iii. *The Sadducees.*

The members of this sect denied altogether the authority of tradition. In their anxiety to establish the freedom of the human will, they were gradually led to assert that there was no controlling Providence over the affairs and actions of men. At first maintaining that men ought to serve God out of pure love, not from hope of reward or fear of punishment, and that virtue, even in this life, was

its own reward, they were led on to assert that there is no future state of reward and happiness^h; and then, by an easy step, that there is neither angel nor spirit: and such doctrines, accommodated to the strong and depraved passions of the young, affording ample scope for worldly gratification of the opulent, and acceptable to those who prided themselves on the sufficiency of human reason, were readily embraced by such persons. The Sadducees, however, were not numerous, though at times they filled important posts. Caiaphas, the high-priest who condemned our Lord, was a Sadducee. See Acts iv. 6; v. 17.

Too many, in every age, act like the Sadducees, upon the principle, "Let us eat and drink, for to-morrow we die."

"The tendency of infidelity to the destruction of social order, is illustrated by a remark of Josephus on this sect; that the Sadducees, whose tenets were the denial of a moral government and a future state, were distinguished from other sects by their ferocity, and again, for their inhumanity in their judicial capacity."—R. Hall. Josephus says, Herod was a Sadducee. This makes the remarks of Herod concerning John the Baptist, a striking instance of the power of conscience overcoming, against a man's own will, the sophistries of infidelity. Matt. xiv. 2; Luke ix. 7.

§ iv. *The Essenes.*

The persons who were known by this name differed both from the Pharisees and the Sadducees; from the Pharisees in their not relying on tradition, or paying any strict regard to the ceremonial law; from the Sadducees, in their belief of a future state, and in their self-denying habits.

Their great error was, refining upon Scripture. While holding the word of God in the greatest reverence, they yet neglected its plain and literal meaning, and indulged in allegorical and mystical interpretations, and from their contemplative habits were induced to intrude into things which were not revealed.

They are not mentioned by name in the New Testament;

^h Matt. xxii. 23. Acts xxiii. 3.

but St. Paul is supposed to have alluded to them in Col. ii. 18, and also in his Epistle to the Ephesians, and in his First Epistle to Timothy. Though we retire from the world, spiritual pride may follow us.

§ v. *The Nazarites.*

Of these we read both in the Old and New Testament ; and they were of two sorts :

1. Those who were devoted by their parents to God in infancy, or before birth ; as Samson, Samuel, and John the Baptist.

2. Those who devoted themselves, either for life or a limited time. Acts xviii. 18 ; xxi. 24.

For the Law of the Nazarites, see Numb. vi.

§ vi. *The Herodians.*

This may be considered rather as a political than a religious sect. Its members were strongly attached to the family of Herod ; of particularly profligate principles ; and, as appears from comparing Mark viii. 15, with Matt. xvi. 6, chiefly Sadducean in their religious tenets. Political expediency was the rule of their conduct. Herod being made and continued king by the authority of the Romans, they were, though Jews, easily reconciled to conform to Roman customs in some particulars which were forbidden by the Mosaic law.

§ vii. *The Galileans.*

In one respect, the members of this party appear in striking contrast to the Herodians, inasmuch as they were distinguished by the constant attempt to shake off the authority of the Romans. They at length infected the whole nation with their turbulent spirit, which ended in the destruction of their capital by Titus. Jehovah being in so peculiar a sense their king, they perverted this into the doctrine that tribute was due to God only ; and that religious liberty and the authority of the Divine laws, were to be defended by force of arms.

Such passages as Rom. xiii. 1, &c. ; 1 Tim. ii. 1, &c. ; 1 Pet. ii. 13, &c., would be peculiarly suitable to preserve us from such an abuse of Christian liberty.

§ viii. *The Publicans.*

The publicans, though generally Jews, were a class of men peculiarly odious to their countrymen. At one time they were coupled with heathensⁱ, at another with harlots^k, always with sinners^l. We learn from the Talmud, and it seems to be implied from Matt. xviii. 17, that a Jew, on becoming a publican, was excluded from the religious society to which he had previously belonged; and the office and character of publicans will explain the reason of this. They were tax-gatherers, and collectors of customs due to the Romans, and thus became associated, in the mind of a Jew, with the loss of what men hold to be most dear to them, money and liberty; and as the characters of men are formed more by the temptations than the duties of their station, these publicans having the opportunity, by farming the taxes, of practising injustice, were notorious extortioners. This serves to magnify the grace of God in such characters as Zaccheus^m and Matthewⁿ.

“Who can now plead the disadvantage of his place, when he sees a publican come to Christ? No calling can prejudice God’s gracious election.”—Bp. Hall.

§ ix. *The Proselytes.*

This name was given to those Gentiles who took upon themselves the obligation of the whole Mosaic law, but were not yet admitted into the congregation of the Lord as adopted children. Gentiles were allowed to worship and offer sacrifices to the God of Israel in the outer court of the temple: Josephus mentions Alexander the Great, Antiochus, and Ptolemy, as having all worshipped and offered sacrifices in the temple; and some of them, persuaded of the sole and universal sovereignty of the Lord Jehovah, might renounce idolatry without embracing the

ⁱ Matt. xviii. 17.

^k Matt. xxi. 32.

^l Matt. ix. 11.

^m Luke xix. 2—10.

ⁿ Matt. ix. 9.

Mosaic law; "but such persons," remarks Bishop Tomline, "appear to me never to be called Proselytes in Scripture, or in any Christian writer." Probably of this number were Naaman^o, the Ethiopian^p, and the Roman centurion^q: see also Acts ii. 10; vi. 5; xiii. 43.

§ x. *The Samaritans.*

For an account of their origin, see 2 Kings xvii.; from which it will appear that they were partly of heathen and partly of Jewish extraction. The 4th chapter of the Gospel of St. John will also give a view of their religious state in the time of our Lord.

Governing themselves exclusively by the Five Books of Moses, in which the place where God would set his name was not mentioned, they, in a spirit of opposition to the Jews, on their return from the Babylonian captivity, fixed, under the direction of Sanballat, the Cushite^r, their temple on Mount Gerizim, because it was the spot from which the blessings were pronounced on the entering of the Israelites into Canaan: thus illustrating the remark, that error has always some association with truth, and that in religion, error is generally the perversion of truth to gratify a worldly mind.

§ xi. *The Epicureans and Stoics.*

In Acts xvii. 18, these two celebrated sects of Grecian philosophers are mentioned. The Epicureans either doubted the existence of gods altogether, or denied that they exercised any providence over the world.

The Stoics professed to believe both the existence of the gods, and their providence in the world; but they attributed all human actions to fixed and unalterable fate, to which they conceived the gods themselves to be subject, and thus destroyed the foundation of all religion as much as the atheistical Epicureans did. The applicability of St. Paul's speech to persons holding such opinions is very remarkable.

^o 2 Kings v. 15. 17.

^p Acts viii. 26, &c.

^q Acts x. 1.

^r This Sanballat, sent by Darius Codomanus, the last king of Persia, to be governor of Samaria, is not to be confounded with Sanballat the Horonite or Moabite (Neh. xiii. 28), who, in the reign of Darius Nothus, opposed Nehemiah.—HALES.

In conclusion it may be remarked, that in all ages one of the chief sources of divisions in the Church has been that which divided the Jewish Church, a disregard of "the sufficiency of the Holy Scriptures for salvation ; so that whatsoever is not read therein, nor may be proved thereby, is not to be required of any man that it should be believed as an article of faith, or be thought requisite or necessary to salvation."—Sixth Article of the Church of England.

PART III.

AN ACCOUNT OF THE BOOKS OF THE BIBLE.

INTRODUCTION.

It will be the object of this part to give some general account of the several books of the Bible; and although it will not be possible to enter into a detailed consideration of each, yet the contents of one will occasionally be dwelt upon more than those of another, in order to illustrate the views already taken of the whole. The three principal subjects on which (as has been already stated, page 48), the Holy Scripture informs us, are,—*the nature and attributes of God, the character and condition of man, and the great work of redemption*: and to these our attention should be directed, with a view to the knowledge of our duty, our character, and the foundation of our hopes for eternity. Short illustrations reminding the reader of these topics, will therefore be offered; especially in the consideration of the Old Testament, where there is perhaps the greater danger of these subjects being overlooked. The Book of Genesis is particularly selected, as suggesting remarks which the reader of Scripture himself may apply to the other books.

In the books of the Old Testament the *great work of redemption* is chiefly brought before us by *the preparation made for the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ as a Saviour*. In noticing the contents of each book, it will be the leading object to illustrate this.

The Old Testament contains thirty-nine books, which may be classed under four general heads, namely:—

- | | |
|---------------------------------------|------------|
| 1. The Pentateuch considered in | Chap. I. |
| 2. The Historical Books | Chap. II. |
| 3. The Poetical Books | Chap. III. |
| 4. The Prophetical Books | Chap. IV. |

The New Testament contains twenty-seven books, which may be classed under four general heads, namely:—

1. The Gospels, considered in Chap. V.
2. The Acts of the Apostles Chap. VI.
3. The Épistles Chap. VII.
4. The Revelation of St. John Chap. VIII.

CHAPTER I.

THE PENTATEUCH, OR LAW.

CONTENTS.—§ i. *On the Book of Genesis.* § ii. *On the Book of Exodus.*
 § iii. *On the Book of Leviticus.* § iv. *On the Book of Numbers.*
 § v. *On the Book of Deuteronomy.* § vi. *The Miracles of Moses.*

THE *Pentateuch* is so called from a Greek word, signifying *five books*, and includes the Books of Genesis, Exodus, Leviticus, Numbers, and Deuteronomy. These were written by Moses in one continued work, and still remain in that form in the public copies now used in the Synagogues.

These books were also called the Law, or the Law of Moses, because throughout the last four of them are interspersed the laws which God, through Moses, appointed for the regulation of the civil government and religion of the Israelites.

The Pentateuch presents us with a compendious history of the world, from the Creation to the death of Moses, a period of about 2553 years. It is a wide description gradually contracted: an account of one nation, preceded by a general sketch of the first state of mankind.

§ i. *On the Book of GENESIS.*

This book, from the first page of which it has been truly said, that a child may learn more in one hour than all the philosophers in the world learned without it in one thousand years, has been properly named Genesis. Genesis means *generation* or *origin*; and here emphatically we have an account of the origin of all things (so far as it concerns us to know). It relates the origin of the universe and of man, and gives an account of the introduction of evil into

our world, and of the remedy which God in his infinite love has provided against it. Indeed, as has been already hinted (p. 44), an observation of the topics of this book, and of the manner in which they are treated, is a clue to the design of the whole Bible. For instance:

Though this book is the foundation of all history (for we are indebted to the tenth chapter of Genesis for all that we know of the origin of nations), yet it is remarkable how much larger a part of it is occupied with the history of one family than with that of all the other inhabitants of the earth. The general history of mankind before the Flood, extending over a period of 1656 years, and including the account of the creation of the world, occupies only *seven* chapters; the general history of mankind after the Flood, during a period of 427 years, occupies only *four* chapters; whilst the particular history of Abraham and his descendants, consisting principally of the details of the life of a few individuals, and treating only of a period of 286 years, occupies *thirty-nine* chapters.

The reason is, that the Bible is not merely a history of man, but emphatically a *History of the Church of God*, of that Church of which Christ is the Head^a. And hence it is that, before the Flood, Seth and his descendants, particularly Noah, and after the Flood Shem and his descendants, particularly Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, occupy the chief place in the history. They constituted the Church of God: in their line was MESSIAH to come. By the history of this Church we are principally taught those subjects of deepest importance to us, namely, just views of God and of our nature, and how we may attain eternal salvation.

The Book of Genesis contains the history of about 2369 years, embracing the period from the Creation to the death of Joseph.

Bishop Blomfield (Lent Lectures on St. John's Gospel) suggests the following important hint. After having read through a book of Scripture, and thus obtained a general knowledge of its contents, he recommends that it should be read through again with reference to some *one* subject. Many illustrations of one subject deepen its impression on the mind. Take, for instance, the instruction to be ob-

^a Eph. i. 22; iv. 15; v. 23. Col. i. 18.

tained from this book concerning God: ever remembering, however, that in regard both to the reasons of many of his actions, and to the glory and majesty of his nature, God dwells in light unapproachable; “the nature and perfections of God are above the understanding of any of his creatures. It is only his own infinite understanding that can frame a perfect idea of his own perfections.”—Abp. Tillotson. 1 Tim. vi. 16; Job xi. 7—9; Deut. xxix. 29.

I. *The Nature and Attributes of God.*

The power, the wisdom, the benevolent and diffusive goodness, the grandeur of God, in the variety, beauty, order, and mystery of creation, as described in the first chapter of Genesis.

Gen. i. 3.—“God said, Let there be light; and there was light.” “By the *word* of the Lord were the heavens made, and all the host of them by the breath of his mouth^b.” “What can I see, O God, in thy creation, but miracles of wonder? Thou madest something of nothing, and of that something all things. Wherein can we now distrust Thee, that hast proved Thyself thus Omnipotent?”—Bp. Hall.

But our attention is directed in Scripture chiefly to the moral attributes of God, as displayed in his dealing with fallen man, with regard to which observe:

The justice of God. Chap. iii. the punishment of the sin of Adam: iv. of Cain: vi. of the whole world by the Flood: xix. of the cities of the plain, and of Lot’s wife: as also the evils brought on Abraham, Isaac, Jacob and his children, when they sinned.

God’s mercy and grace. Chap. iii. 15, showing the riches of his love in the promise of a Saviour, even before the sentence on man was pronounced: iv. expostulating with Cain: vi. so long delaying the Flood, warning for 120 years, not only by the preaching of Noah, but also by the building of the ark. 1 Pet. iii. 20; Heb. xi. 7.

“How loth is God to strike, that threats so long! He that delights in revenge surprises his adversary; whereas he that gives long warning desires to be prevented.”—Bp. Hall.

Thus one reason why Abraham and his descendants were not permitted to possess Canaan for 400 years was that the iniquity of the Amorites was not yet full. Gen. xv. 16.

^b Psalm xxxiii. 6; cxlviii. 5.

Gen. xxvii. 20.—Jacob's previous misconduct gives a peculiar lustre to the compassion of God, in favouring him with the vision of angels, as described Gen. xxviii. 12—15; and let us remember why these things were written. Rom. xv. 4; Heb. i. 14.

God's readiness to hear prayer. Chap. xx. 17, the prayer of Abraham for Abimelech: xviii. for Sodom: xxiv. 12, that of Eliezer for Abraham: xix. 21, Lot's prayer: xxi. 17, Ishmael's prayer: xxxii. 24 (compared with Hos. xii. 4), Jacob's prayer: xvi. 1—4, with Prov. xvi. 3.

The Providence of God: or, in other words, the way in which God preserves and governs all things: his absolute control over what to us seems "the vast empire of chance," as seen in the critical moment when the Ishmaelitish merchants arrived^c; and in the circumstance connected with Rebekah's coming to the well^d, which, though quite accidental on her part, was evidently designed by God, and showed that the prayer of the faithful servant had been heard. Gen. xxiv. 7. 12—15.

Observe also God's government over the minds, the wills, passions, counsels, and actions of bad men; as, for instance, in the case of Joseph's brethren^e. In their thoughts were envy, murder, covetousness, &c., and they sold their brother as a slave to prevent the fulfilment of his dreams; but the providence of God overruled that very act to the accomplishment of those dreams and their own preservation from famine. So the malice of the devil, the treachery of Judas, the envy of the Jews, and the injustice of Pilate, accomplished the crucifixion of our Lord, but caused thereby the salvation of the world, and the brightest display of the glory of God. Acts iv. 27, 28; Rom. viii. 32.

God's faithfulness to his promises. Chap. viii. 22, "seed-time and harvest," &c. Compare xxviii. 15, with xlviii. 15. But the faithfulness of God is particularly seen in the provision made for the fulfilment of his great promise, iii. 15. Trace this in his raising up Seth after Abel, iv. 25: and again in Enos, Enoch, Noah, Abraham, &c.; particularly observing how God most helped his Church when it most needed help. In this period of the history of the Church, the whole plan of redemption seems frequently

^c Gen. xxxvii. 25.

^d Gen. xxiv. 15.

^e Gen. i. 20.

to have depended upon a single life ; yet after 4000 years of peril, in the fulness of time, how was the promise fulfilled, in a manner which it had not entered into the heart of man to conceive ! Ps. cv. 8. Luke i. 72, 73. 1 Cor. ii. 9.

The honour which God puts upon his people. This is shown by his blessing others for their sake. Chap. xviii. 32, for ten righteous He would have spared Sodom. Again, xix. 21, God spared Zoar even for Lot's sake, and Sodom itself while Lot was in it. Chap. xxx. 27, selfish Laban was blessed for Jacob's sake ; xxxix. 5, Potiphar for Joseph's sake.

God tries the faith of his people. Trace this in Noah ; and again in Abraham^f, "whose whole life almost," as Bp. Newton remarks, "was a series of trials. His leaving his native country and kindred, his sojourning in the land of promise as in a strange land, his being driven by famine to seek for sustenance in Egypt, so long a time intervening between the promise of a numerous posterity and the birth of a son, the birth of Ishmael so many years before that of Isaac, the painful operation of circumcision, the more painful expulsion of Hagar and Ishmael, were all so many severe trials of his faith and obedience ; but severer than all together was the command to offer up his beloved son, who was to be heir of the promises, and father of the blessed seed." Notice also how Abraham's other sons abound in children, while Isaac, in whom his seed is to be as the stars of heaven for multitude, goes childless for twenty years after his marriage ; and that a marriage on which the Divine blessing had been so remarkably sought and obtained. Consider Esau's posterity ; at first much more numerous and distinguished among men than Jacob's. Gen. xxxvi. 15.

God's providence is unsearchable. The Scripture (as Bishop Sherlock remarks) often resolves all things into the sole will and pleasure of God, and in many cases will allow us to seek for no other cause^g. Thus Abel was slain for righteousness' sake ; but Enoch was translated. Jacob was preferred before Esau, and this was determined before they

^f Gen. xxi. 5 ; Rom. iv. 16—25.

^g Dan. iv. 35 ; Psalm cxxxv. 6 ; Rom. ix. 20.

were born ^h. When God called Abraham to offer up Isaac, He gave him no reason why He called him to do so; nor probably was that reason fully comprehended by the Church till the offering of Christ.

Similar illustrations of God's thus acting may be seen in other parts of Scripture. Thus Elijah was taken up to heaven without dying ⁱ, but John the Baptist, who came in the spirit of Elijah ^k, who was more than a prophet, and than whom there had not arisen a greater among them that were born of women ^l, seemed to be sacrificed to the revenge of an adulteress ^m. But we must remember, that God's providence is unsearchable, and his ways are past finding out ⁿ. Our simple inquiry should be, "Lord, what wouldst Thou have me to do?" assured that the Judge of all the earth does right, and that what we know not now we shall know hereafter, so far as that knowledge will contribute to our happiness. The belief of another world gives a general answer to all the difficulties of Providence.

Observe also the practical use which God would have us make of the consideration of his attributes as motives to duty. Chap. xvii. 1, "I am the Almighty God," &c. This is the first time we meet with this name; and God plainly here uses it to confirm his covenant, and thus to strengthen Abraham's faith while the execution of God's providence respecting Isaac was delayed, and to prevent him from adopting sinful expedients to hasten it.

The various motives by which God would lead men to obedience. Thus with regard to Adam, even in Paradise, an appeal is made to his fears as well as his hopes ^o. So Noah was "moved with fear ^p." Abraham rejoiced to see the day of Christ, but on him the consideration of temporal as well as eternal good was urged ^q. Nor are such motives limited to the Old Testament ^r, though under the Gospel the great constraining motive is the love of Christ. See 1 Pet. i. 8; 2 Cor. v. 14.

^h Rom. ix. 11, 12.

ⁱ 2 Kings ii. 11.

^k Luke i. 17.

^l Matt. xi. 11.

^m Matt. xiv. 8—11.

ⁿ Prov. xxv. 2.

Rom. xi. 33, 34.

^o Gen. ii. 17.

^p Heb. xi. 7.

^q Gen. xiii. 14—17.

^r See 1 Pet. iii. 10.

II. *The Character and Condition of Man.*

The nature of those temptations to which men are exposed. Temptation is an enticement to transgress the law of God, from some supposed advantage to be obtained, or evil to be avoided. Observe the nature of those enticements which prevailed with Eve^s; the advantage she expected, and how her fears were removed^t. In the case of Abraham^u, observe the evil he feared. Eve was tempted by the devil, Adam by his wife, Sarah by her husband^v, Jacob by his mother^w. See Matt. xxvi. 41; 2 Cor. xi. 3; Eph. vi. 11.

The liability of men to sin. Even in the families of the patriarchs we find Ham disrespectful to his father; Ishmael scoffing at his brother^x; Esau disobedient to his parents, and negligent of his privileges^y; Joseph's brethren envious; Simeon and Levi cruel^z; Reuben and Judah guilty of still worse sins. But perhaps the liability of men to sin is more strongly illustrated by the failings of God's most faithful servants, such as Noah, Abraham, Isaac, Jacob, &c. Noah sinned after such a display of his faith in building the ark, &c.; Abraham twice offended in the same way, after having given such repeated proofs of his obedience to God; Isaac committed the very sin which had brought shame on his father^a. To these, illustrations from other parts of Scripture may be added: as the murmuring of Elijah immediately after he had displayed such strong faith in destroying the prophets of Baal^b; and the hastiness of David towards Nabal^c, at the very moment he was exercising such forbearance towards Saul: men failing in the very graces for which they were most distinguished. "What are we men when left to ourselves! While God upholds us, no temptation can move us. When He leaves us, no temptation is too weak to overthrow us."—Bp. Hall.

The tendency of men to neglect warnings, as shown by the old world, and by the cities of the plain. See Luke xvii. 26—30.

The folly and deceit of sin. How strikingly is this shown

^s Gen. iii. 6.^t Gen. iii. 4.^u Gen. xii. 12.^v Gen. xii. 13.^w Gen. xxvii. 6—17.^x Gen. xxi. 9; Gal. iv. 22.^y Gen. xxv. 33.

Heb. xii. 16.

^z Gen. xlix. 5—7.^a Gen. xxvi. 7.^b 1 Kings xviii.; xix. 3, 4.^c 1 Sam. xxv. 13.

in the case of Adam, Eve, and Cain, imagining they could hide themselves or their conduct from God! Gen. iii. 8; iv. 9; Jer. xxiii. 24; Ps. xciv. 9.

What advantage did Adam and Eve, Cain, Abraham, Isaac, Jacob, or Joseph's brethren, gain by their deceit? Were they not deceived? particularly Jacob by Laban and his own children. Compare xxvii. 9, with xxxvii. 31. By such examples we are taught, "that all is vanity that is not honest, and that there is no solid wisdom but in real piety."—Evelyn.

The devil in tempting Eve, the builders of Babel, and Joseph's brethren, thought to defeat God's purposes; but did they do so? Prov. xxi. 30.

The progress of sin. This may be noticed in Eve: though made in the image of God^d, yet, as soon as she had sinned, she became, like Satan, a tempter of others to sin^e. Observe, also, the progress of sin in Cain^f: his first crime was a disregard of sacred matters; this was followed by envy and murmuring against God, and at last led to the impious and inhuman murder of his brother.

The resentment of Esau soon kindled into the intention to murder, illustrating the description given of the wicked, that "their feet run to evil, and make haste to shed blood^g." The envy of Joseph's brethren, first shown in not speaking peaceably to him, ended in the determination to murder him^h. Cruelty to their brother needed a lie to hide it from their fatherⁱ. No doubt also Jacob went much further in lying than he intended, when, first yielding to his mother's entreaty, he deceived his father. Gen. xxvii. 20.

"Chap. xxxiv. shows how one sin leads to another, and, like flames of fire, spreads desolation in every direction. Dissipation leads to seduction, seduction produces wrath, wrath thirst for revenge, the thirst of revenge has recourse to treachery, treachery issues in murder, and murder is followed by lawless depredation."—Fuller on Genesis.

Observe the *suffering* which sin brings not only on those who first commit it, but on others who are involved in its consequences. Abraham's equivocation involved his wife

^d Gen. i. 26, 27.

^e Gen. iii. 6.

^f Gen. iv. 8.

^g Prov. i. 16; Rom. iii. 15.

^h Gen. xxxvii. 4. 18.

ⁱ Gen. xxxvii. 31, 32; Rom. iii. 15.

in sin, and brought plagues on Pharaoh and Abimelech, exposing them both to temptation. The strife between the servants of Abraham and Lot^k occasioned the separation of their masters; and from that time Lot went wrong. Lot's sin in living in Sodom involved his family in those strong temptations by which they were corrupted, and perished^l. Jacob's sin provoked his brother to sin. Gen. xxvii. 41.

These illustrations from Genesis may be compared with illustrations taken from other parts of Scripture. Thus, the sin of the Amalekites, the descendants of the eldest son of Esau^m, brought destruction upon them more than 400 years afterⁿ; and hence we learn, as Bishop Butler remarks, that where the majesty of Jehovah is insulted, present delay of punishment affords no presumption of final impunity^o. "His blood be on us and on our children," said the Jews at the crucifixion of Christ, and now, for more than 1700 years, has that blood been required at their hands. This example presents a yet more awful exhibition of the evil of sin, from a consideration of its *remote* consequences.

But the most awful fact illustrative of the consequences of sin is, that Adam's sin, the first sin of the first man, corrupted the nature of mankind, and brought them under condemnation to eternal wrath. Rom. v. 18. Eph. ii. 1. 3.

As illustrating what was said (p. 23), that the great evil of sin is, that it dishonours God, it is observable that the reason given for the punishment of the murderer with death is taken from the affront which he offers to God, not from the injury he does to man. See Gen. ix. 6.

In the same light the sin of Adam is to be viewed. The act might in itself seem trifling, but by breaking one command he violated the authority on which all rest^p. "How awful the thought, that the same God who condemned Adam for one transgression, regards every sin of which we are guilty with the same abhorrence, and that our iniquities are more in number than the hairs of our head!"—Dwight.

Man's false estimate of blessings. As all our estimates

^k Gen. xiii. 7.

^l Gen. xiii. 10—13; xix.

^m Exod. xvii. 8. 14.

ⁿ 1 Sam. xv. 2.

^o Analogy, Part i. chap. ii.

^p James ii. 10.

of right and wrong, good and evil, should be derived from the word of God, we may prove by its assistance the real value of things which are highly esteemed among men. For instance :

The riches of Abraham and Lot occasioned their separation ; Isaac's wells led to strife ^q ; Sodom's wealth was the occasion of her corruption and destruction ^r. The beauty of Sarah and Rebekah induced their husbands to practise deceit. Gen. xx. 2 ; xxvi. 7.

The value of God's favour. Let the attention be constantly directed to this subject, and to the means by which his favour may be attained.

It was the favour of God which constituted the happiness of Paradise, which delivered Enoch from death, Noah from the flood, and Lot from the fiery tempest. This was Abraham's shield and reward : this gave Isaac peace and honour in the presence of his enemies ; delivered Jacob from all evil ; comforted Joseph in slavery and in prison, and raised him above the greater trials of worldly prosperity.

The favour of God is but little thought of ; men take very little pains to obtain it ; but on a review of the history of the world, what has survived the wreck of time, but the Bible and the Church, God's word and God's people ?

The nature of human life. The young enter into life expecting great things from the world. Observe then ^s, Eve's expectations from Cain, how disappointed ! She said, "I have gotten a man from the Lord ;" perhaps hoping that he would be that seed of the woman who should bruise the serpent's head : but he proved a murderer. Observe, also, Isaac's anxiety for a family, and the little comfort he had even from his favourite son ^t. He, who was so emphatically the child of promise ^u, was a stranger in the land of promise ^x ; he spent nearly the last forty years of his life bedridden and blind, had but two children, and those separated by a deadly quarrel ; embittering his declining years, the one by his marriage, the other by his deceit. But thus was he led to desire a better, even a heavenly country.

Gen. xxx. 1 ; xxxv. 19.—Mark Rachel's wish, and Rachel's death ; and let the contrast check inordinate desires.

^q Gen. xiii. 7 ; xxvi. 20.

^r Ezek. xvi. 49. See Mark x. 23.

^s Gen. iv. 1.

^t Gen. xxvi. 35.

^u Gen. xxi. 12.

^x Gen. xxxvii. 1.

Gen. xlvii. 9.—Attend to Jacob's testimony, "Few and evil," &c.; and let us thank God, as Fuller observes, that, as "we through our sins have made our days evil, He has in mercy made them few. It is well for us that a life of sin and sorrow is not immortal."

Affliction. We naturally shun affliction. But, now that man is a sinner, a life of labour and sorrow has become a restraint on sin, converting the curse into a blessing. The Patriarchs were greatly benefited by affliction (particularly Jacob, and Joseph's brethren); contrast the unfeeling conduct of Joseph's brethren to him and his father, with the conviction of sin, brought upon them by their troubles, and their tender solicitude for their father's feelings in reference to Joseph's brother Benjamin. See Gen. xlii. 21; xliv. 16. Thus also was Joseph fitted for greater usefulness; by suffering from injustice, he was more effectually taught to sympathize with the oppressed, and rule justly. The Book of Genesis represents affliction to us as the school in which wisdom is acquired; restraining men's passions, exercising their graces, weaning them from the world, and wonderfully displaying the glory of God's providence. It is this view of affliction which leads the Apostle James to exhort believers to rejoice in it. James i. 2. See also Rom. v. 3—5.

Counterfeit Virtues. Every virtue has its counterfeit. It is desirable to be wise, but not as Eve sought wisdom^y. Husbands should love their wives^z, but not as Adam did, in hearkening to Eve when she urged him to sin^a. We ought to worship God, but not as Cain did, disregarding God's *appointed* way^b. Wives should obey their husbands^c, but not as Sarah did Abraham, in consenting to tell a lie^d. Servants should take care of their masters' property, but not as Abraham and Lot's herdsmen, to quarrel about it^e. Children should obey their parents^f, but not as Jacob obeyed Rebekah^g. We should desire to forward the accomplishment of God's declared will, but not as Rebekah did^h, by doing evil that good might come.

^y Gen. iii. 5, 6.

^z Eph. v. 25; Col. iii. 19.

^a Gen. iii. 6.

^b Gen. iv. 3, 5.

^c Eph. v. 22.

^d Gen. xii. 11—15.

^e Gen. xiii. 6, 7.

^f Col. iii. 20.

^g Gen. xxvii. 13, 14.

^h Gen. xxvii. 6—10.

Other parts of Scripture abound with illustrations of counterfeit virtues. Such was Ahab's compassion in sparing Benhadadⁱ, and his hospitality in entertaining Jehoshaphat^k: such was the delight of the Jews in God's service, alluded to in Isa. lviii. 2: such was the zeal of Paul before his conversion^l, and that of the unbelieving Jews^m. It has been very justly said, that it is not enough that we act from a sense of duty, that we feel a powerful obligation to pursue a particular course of conduct, and to avoid whatever is inconsistent with it; we must inquire on what grounds our sense of duty is founded. It is possible to have a high sense of duty, and even to act consistently with it, without a deep reverence for God, without a love to Christ, or of those affections which Christianity requires. Our aim must be to do what is right in the sight of God, and our rule must be the word of Godⁿ. Pascal remarks, that "we never do evil so thoroughly and cordially as when we are led to it by a false principle of conscience," and the conduct of Paul, as described in Acts xxvi. 9—11, is an instance of this. Conscience can only be a safe guide when enlightened by the Holy Spirit, and directed by the Holy Scriptures. Isa. viii. 20.

Particular virtues or vices. It may be desirable, after having read a book of Scripture, for a time to limit the attention to the illustration it affords of some one virtue or vice, observing its development under different circumstances.

Thus the different circumstances under which faith was shown in Abel, Noah, Abraham, Isaac, Jacob, Joseph, &c. may be compared. The same may be observed of particular vices, as lying, in Cain, Abraham, Jacob, &c.; envy, in Cain, Rachel, Joseph's brethren; covetousness, in Lot, Laban, &c.; while, again, the pride of the Babel builders may be compared with some illustration from another part of Scripture, as Nebuchadnezzar^o, &c.

Relative duties. Having read through a book of Scripture, compare the conduct of different persons who are mentioned in it, as filling the same relations, stations, &c.;

ⁱ 1 Kings xx. 34.

^k 1 Kings xxii. 4; 2 Chron. xviii. 2.

^l Gal. i. 14; Phil. iii. 6.

^m Acts xxii. 3; Rom. x. 2.

ⁿ Heb. xi. 6.

1 Cor. xvi. 22.

John iii. 36.

^o Dan. iv. 30.

husbands, wives, parents, children, brothers, servants, &c.; rich, poor; kings, priests, &c. For instance: Abraham was uncle to Lot, and Laban was uncle to Jacob; compare Abraham's conduct to Lot, with Laban's to Jacob. Eliezer was a servant in Abraham's house; Jacob in Laban's^p; Joseph in Potiphar's^q.

Gen. xiii. 7 gives an account of quarrelsome servants. These servants may be compared with other servants; as David^r; Jeroboam^s; Obadiah^t; Naaman's captive maid and his other servants^u; the centurion's servants^x; Gehazi, a deceitful and dishonest servant^y; Onesimus^z, &c. See also Job xix. 15, 16. And these examples may be compared with passages where the duties of persons standing in those relations, stations, &c., are enforced by precept, as Eph. v. vi.; Col. iii. iv.; Titus ii.; 1 Pet. ii. iii.

Joseph is a bright example in every relation and period of life. At the age of seventeen years he appears uncorrupted by the wickedness of his brethren, or the partiality of his father; discountenancing the sin^a of the former, and prompt in his obedience to the latter^b; though unjustly sold as a slave, he is represented as strictly faithful to his master^c: abhorring youthful lust, though exposed to the strongest temptation^d; afflicted and persecuted, yet finding, even when confined as a criminal, opportunity for doing good^e; and though flattered by a king, disowning his own power to interpret Pharaoh's dream, and boldly avowing before this heathen and despotic monarch the power of God^f. At the age of thirty years he is suddenly raised to the right hand of Pharaoh, yet is unseduced by the splendour of his situation: being guided by the Spirit, he becomes a pattern to rulers of industry, prudence, and justice^g. As a courtier he shows the strictest regard to truth, with true nobleness of mind avowing the disreputable employment of his connexions^h. As a brother, he exhibits

^p See Gen. xxxi. 38—41.

^q See Gen. xxxix. 1—6.

^r 1 Sam. xviii. 5.

^s 1 Kings xi. 28.

^t 1 Kings xviii. 3.

^u 2 Kings v. 2, 3. 13.

^x Luke vii. 8.

Acts x. 7.

^y 2 Kings v. 20—27.

^z Philemon 11.

^a Gen. xxxvii. 2.

^b Gen. xxxvii. 13, with 4. 8. 11.

^c Gen. xxxix. 4—6.

^d Gen. xxxix. 9.

^e Gen. xxxix. 22; xl. 7.

^f Gen. xli. 16.

^g Gen. xli. 38. 46. 48.

^h Gen. xli. 31—34.

unabated affection not only to Benjaminⁱ, but to those who had hated him even unto death; for his apparent harshness arose from his anxiety to bring them to repentance: and when he had accomplished this^k, his whole conduct to them was marked by peculiar tenderness, and the most studied attention to their feelings and welfare^l. As a son, though lord of Egypt, he manifests the most affectionate respect for his aged parent, who was now dependent upon him^m. As a father, his piety appears in the names he gave his childrenⁿ: and his earnest desire for God's blessing for them, in bringing them to Jacob's dying bed^o. For eighty years^p he lived in the midst of the greatest worldly grandeur, surrounded with every temptation to worldliness and idolatry; but his dying breath testified how entirely his heart and treasure were in God's promises. Gen. i. 25; see also Heb. xi. 22; 1 John v. 4.

III. *Preparation made for the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ as a Saviour.*

Collect the prophecies respecting Christ, iii. 15, &c. This promise or covenant of grace was renewed to Noah^q, and again to Abraham, who was born only two years after the death of Noah. It was promised to him that "all the families of the earth should be blessed in his seed^r," and "that seed is Christ^s." Thus was the Gospel preached to Abraham.

Notice the types, particularly that of sacrifice, as in the case of Abel, iv. 4; and that of Noah, viii. 20. Observe that the promise to Noah followed the acceptance of the burnt-offering. (Compare Gen. viii. 21, with Eph. v. 2.) When God made the covenant with Abraham, He appointed that sacrifice should be offered. Gen. xv. 9.

The offering up of Isaac by his own father shadowed forth the love of God to us in the sacrifice of the death of Christ. Gen. xxii. 3—10; John iii. 16; Heb. xi. 17; Rom. viii. 32. See also xxvi. 25, and xxxi. 54, xlv. 1; where we learn the use which Isaac and Jacob made of sacrifice.

ⁱ Gen. xliii. 29, 30; xlv. 14.

^k Gen. xlv. 18—34.

^l Gen. xlv. 4—13; i. 21.

^m Gen. xlv. 29; xlvii. 7.

ⁿ Gen. xli. 51, 52.

^o Gen. xlviii. 1, &c.

^p Gen. xli. 46; i. 26.

^q Gen. vi. 18.

^r Gen. xxii. 18; xii. 3.

^s Gal. iii. 16; Acts iii. 25.

When prophecy declared that the sons of Jacob should become heads of tribes, it pointed out the particular one from which the Messiah should come. This privilege was not given to either of Jacob's favourite sons Joseph and Benjamin, nor to his eldest son, but to Judah^t, the fourth in descent^u.

The typical nature of the Old Testament *history* may also be noticed. Adam was a type of Christ^w. As the first Adam was the original of our natural and earthly being; so is Christ the second Adam of our spiritual and heavenly being; and as by the first sin came into the world, so by the second came righteousness^x. From Abraham having paid tithes to Melchizedek, St. Paul argues that the Mosaic dispensation was intended to be subservient to that of the Gospel^y. He also points out that the birth of Abraham's two sons was typical of the two covenants^z; thus showing, as Lowth remarks, that the eminent persons of foregoing ages, and the remarkable passages of their lives, did bear some resemblance or representation of Him that was to come.

These are some of the many hints which may be suggested to prompt the reader's mind to further inquiry.

In reply to the objection that such a plan involves considerable repetition of the same subject, it may be said, in the words of Locke, "that repetition helps much to the fixing of any ideas in the memory; and those especially *that are conveyed into the mind in more ways than one* fix themselves best in the memory, and remain clearest and longest there."

§ ii. *On the Book of* EXODUS.

The title of this book is peculiarly appropriate. Exodus means "departure;" and this book contains the account of the departure of the Israelites out of Egypt; an event which is the foundation of their whole history as a nation, and which is more frequently referred to than any other in their subsequent history.

^t Gen. xlix. 10.

^u 2 Pet. i. 21.

^w Rom. v. 14.

^x 1 Cor. xv. 22. 45; 2 Cor. v. 21.

^y Gen. xiv. 18—20.

Heb. vii. 1, &c.

^z Gal. iv. 22, &c.

The two great subjects of this book are, the deliverance of the Israelites from Egypt, and God's covenant with them in the wilderness. In reference to which events this book may be thus divided.

I. Their oppressed state in Egypt after the death of Joseph, ch. i.

II. The birth of Moses their deliverer, and the preparation for his great office, ch. ii.—vi.

III. Their miraculous deliverance, and the destruction of their enemies, ch. vii.—xiv.

IV. Their entrance into the wilderness, and the miraculous provision made for their guidance and support, ch. xv.—xviii.

V. Their national covenant with God, made, broken, and renewed, ch. xix.—xxxiv.

VI. The tabernacle built, and God's solemn possession of it, ch. xxxv.—xl.

Thus were they formed as a distinct people under Jehovah as their king. See Exod. xix. 4—6.

Exodus comprehends a period of about 145 years, from the death of Joseph to the erection of the Tabernacle.

Of the three subjects on which it is the principal intention of the Bible to inform us—namely, the attributes of God, the character of man, and the great work of man's redemption—this book affords abundant illustration. For instance: in reference to the attributes of God, a wonderful view of his providence is shown, in leading Pharaoh's daughter to bring up him who should be the deliverer of Israel from Pharaoh's oppression^a; the long-suffering of God to Pharaoh is no less observable^b. The very plagues of Egypt were calculated to expose to this king the folly of his idolatry, and thus to lead him to renounce it. The Nile and the fish in it were the objects of their idolatrous worship: God turned the waters of the Nile into blood, and the fish died. The wind was one of their deities: God made the wind the messenger of his wrath in bringing the locusts, and again of his mercy in removing them. They worshipped the sun: God brought upon them for three days midnight darkness: while in Goshen, where the Israelites dwelt, it was light. Beasts, particularly the bull,

^a Exod. ii. 5—10; iii. 10.

^b Exod. viii. 13. 31; ix. 33; x. 19.

were the representatives of some of their chief deities : God sent a murrain among the cattle^c, which destroyed them. In Pharaoh and the Israelites is seen the depravity of man by nature ; and in Moses the change which Divine grace produces on man.

The limits, however, of this little work will only allow the notice of that which is the peculiar feature of the Old Testament (p. 61) ; namely, the preparation made for the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ as a Saviour.

Preparation made for the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ as a Saviour.

I. *Object of the Mosaic dispensation to show man's need of a Saviour.*—This is remarkably shown in the miracles of Moses, so frequently inflicting death as the punishment of sin, and in this respect so strikingly contrasted with the miracles of our Lord, nearly all of which were miracles of mercy^d. In the manner in which the Law was given from Mount Sinai the same object appears^e. “If the Law was thus given, how shall it be required ! O God, how powerful art Thou to inflict vengeance upon sinners, who didst thus forbid sin ! and if Thou wert so terrible a lawgiver, what a judge shalt Thou appear !”—Bp. Hall.

Man's need of the outpouring of the Holy Spirit (which was one great object of the Saviour's coming) is in a striking manner illustrated by the little effect produced by the most stupendous miracles of mercy and judgment, in disposing either Pharaoh or the Israelites to love God.

II. *Appearances of the Angel of Jehovah.*—In this Book of Exodus the same Angel who had been through Jacob's life his deliverer from all evil^f appears as the great Redeemer of Israel from Egyptian bondage. The Angel of Jehovah speaks of Himself as the God of Abraham, as “I AM THAT I AM^g.” To the same Person is attributed, in the New Testament, the giving of the law to the Israelites^h. He is also described as conducting them through the wildernessⁱ; and is mentioned in the Book of Joshua^k as

^c Exod. ix. 3—7.

^d John i. 17.

^e Exod. xix. 16 ; xx. 18, with Heb. xii. 18—21.

^f Gen. xlviii. 15, 16.

^g Exod. iii. 2—15.

^h Acts vii. 38, with Exod. xix. 19, 20 ; xx. 1.

ⁱ Exod. xxiii. 20, 21.

^k Josh. v. 13—15 ; vi. 2.

appearing to give him possession of Canaan, and requiring the same act of homage from him as he had from Moses. See Exod. iii. 5.

As there seems no doubt that this Angel was the "Word of God," these appearances made a preparation for his coming as a Saviour, such temporal deliverances shadowing forth that which was spiritual.

III. *Types*.—It is a remarkable circumstance that Christ our passover was sacrificed for us, and our deliverance from the bondage of sin completed, in the same month, and on the same day of the month, that the Israelites were delivered from the bondage of Egypt. The Israelites went out of Egypt, and Christ was put to death, on the fifteenth day of the month Nisan. Man did not intend this coincidence (compare Matt. xxvi. 5, with Acts xiii. 27); but here is evidently an adaptation by God of this part of the history of his chosen people to the times of the Gospel. So, also, their passing from Egypt through the Red Sea, the Wilderness, and Jordan, to the promised land, is a lively representation of a Christian's pilgrimage through life to that rest which remaineth for the people of God.

The great subject of Revelation, which was to be fully unfolded in the New Testament, was the mediatorial character of Christ. This consists in his being a King, a Prophet, and a Priest: and in each of these points He was typified by Moses. As King, Christ rules over his Church: and so Moses was a type of Him, in being appointed the ruler and leader of the Israelites. As Prophet, Christ has given laws to his Church; and so Moses was a type of Him, in being a lawgiver to the Israelites. As Priest, Christ, by shedding his own blood, has made a covenant between God and man, and is now interceding for his Church at the right hand of his Father; and so also Moses was a type of Him, 1st, in being commanded to ratify the covenant made between God and the Israelites, by the sprinkling of blood¹ (which act reminded them of their unfitness as sinners to enter into any covenant with God, except through an appointed atonement); and, 2ndly, in his powerful intercessions^m, by which many blessings were obtained, and the wrath of God was turned away from his peopleⁿ.

¹ Exod. xxiv. 8.

^m Exod. xv. 25; xvii. 11—13; xxxii. 11.

ⁿ Matt. xxvi. 28.

Heb. ix. 19—22.

Compare Exod. xii. 46, which gives an account of the Paschal Lamb (or, as it is called in ver. 27, the "sacrifice of the Lord's passover"), with John xix. 36, and 1 Cor. v. 7, 8, particularly observing how the blood of the victim was made the means of preservation from the wrath of God; and how, by partaking of its flesh, they were strengthened for their journey.

The manna was a type: compare xvi. 15, with 1 Cor. x. 3; John vi. 31. 49. 58.

The Red Sea was a type of baptism. 1 Cor. x. 1, 2.

The smitten rock was a type: compare xvii. 6 with 1 Cor. x. 4; John vii. 37: and the Mercy-seat: compare xxv. 17—22, with Rom. iii. 25; Heb. iv. 16.

The Tabernacle, built according to an exact pattern given by God, and the solemn possession God took of it by filling it with his glory, seem to have prefigured the Word made flesh and tabernacling among us. Compare Exod. xxv. 9. 40; xl. 34, with John i. 14. See also John ii. 19. 21. Col. ii. 9.

The Daily Sacrifice and burning of incense shadowed forth the sacrifice and intercession of Christ. (Rev. viii. 3; Luke i. 10, with Exod. xxix. 42; xxx. 7.)

As to the use we may make of these types, let us remember, that under temptation we have a great Mediator; under a sense of sin, we are called to behold the very Paschal Lamb who was offered for us, and hath taken away the sin of the world. In his name, let us not fear to come boldly to a mercy-seat; and let our heart be filled with love at his wonderful condescension in having tabernacled in our nature, praying that the same mind may be in us which was in Him^o. A day did not pass but the whole congregation were reminded of their constant need of an atoning sacrifice, and invited by faith to partake of its blessing. Let this teach us to live a life of faith in Christ our Saviour; esteeming, as Moses did, the reproach of Christ greater riches than any thing that this world can give. Heb. xi. 26.

This is to apply the types to their right use, and shows how the Jewish and Christian dispensations mutually illustrate and confirm each other; the sacrifices and ceremonies

of the Law preparing for the atonement of Christ; and that atonement reflecting a dignity and glory upon them, by manifesting their nature and completing their design.

§ iii. *On the Book of LEVITICUS.*

The Book of Exodus closes with God's taking solemn possession of the Tabernacle; the Book of Leviticus treats of the services enjoined there: or, in other words, the rites and ceremonies of the Jewish religion. The descendants of Levi, as has been already noticed (p. 170), were set apart to instruct the people in the knowledge of these rites, and to conduct the religious worship of the Jews; and this book is called Leviticus, or the book of the Levites, because it contains the rules which would enable them to discharge those duties.

The rites and ceremonies contained in this book are reducible to the three following heads:

I. *Sacrifices*; all of which had a typical reference to Christ, and especially to his atonement.

II. *Purifications* from legal uncleanness. These represented the necessity of inward purity of heart, and man's need of the Holy Spirit to purify the soul.

III. *Various solemn Festivals*, calculated to unite their tribes as one nation; to keep them separated from other nations; to promote among them piety, and prefigure to them the blessings of the Gospel. See p. 176. 182.

This book records the transactions of but one month; but the facts it mentions are peculiarly appropriate to its subject, viz. the public worship of God, by which especially his great name was to be honoured. These facts are, the consecration of Aaron and his sons to the priesthood, the punishment of Nadab and Abihu, and the stoning of the blasphemer. The first instructs us in the importance God attaches to his worship; the second shows, in a most awful manner, the sinfulness of those who interfere with it, without being duly appointed; and the third is a solemn warning of the danger of taking God's holy name in vain. "Therefore," says Bishop Hall, "He strikes some that He may warn all." The prophecies contained in chapter xxvi. have the same bearing; showing the awful consequences which would follow upon the neglect of God.

Aaron's resignation is a touching example of the in-

fluence of grace^p. "There is no greater proof of grace," says the same pious Bishop, "than to smart patiently, and humbly and contentedly to rest the heart on the justice and wisdom of God's proceeding." Compare Micah vii. 9, with Exod. xxxii. 2—5; Deut. ix. 20.

In Nadab and Abihu is also seen the tendency of the heart of man to sin. Previously how honoured had they been by God^q! they were just consecrated to his service; and a miracle had attended the consecration^r. Their crime consisted in performing their duty in an irregular manner: they "offered strange fire" on the altar, contrary to God's express command. See Exod. xxx. 9.

Preparation made for the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ as our Saviour.

Types.—The Levitical law is, throughout, a shadow of good things to come^s. But particularly observe the services on the great day of Atonement^t, as explained Heb. ix. See p. 179.

"God came to dwell among them, and He dwelt upon a mercy-seat, and all their worship was directed thither; but they were not to approach even the mercy-seat but through the mediation of an high-priest; nor might the high-priest himself come into the holy place, where God was supposed to have his special residence, without the blood of sacrifices; which blood is expressly declared to have been for an atonement, because of the uncleanness of the children of Israel, and because of their transgressions and their sins." See chap. xvi. 16; compare also xvii. 11, "It is the blood that maketh an atonement for the soul," with Heb. x. 4, &c.

§ iv. *On the Book of NUMBERS.*

This name is given to the book, because it contains an account of the numberings of the people of Israel; the first of which took place in the beginning of the second year after their departure out of Egypt; the second in the plains of Moab, at the conclusion of their journey in

^p Lev. x. 3.

^q Exod. xxiv. 9, 10.

^r Lev. ix. 24.

^s Col. ii. 16, 17.

^t Heb. x. 1.

Lev. xvi.

the wilderness. This book comprehends a period of about thirty-eight years; but most of the events related in it happened in the first and last of those years. The date of the facts recorded in the middle of the book cannot be precisely ascertained. The history presents us with an account of the consecration of the tabernacle, and the Levites; and of the journeys and encampments of the Israelites, particularly marked by their murmurings and rebellions. Various laws are repeated, and some new ones added. An enumeration is also given of the twelve tribes, and directions for the division of the land of Canaan, of which they were about to take possession.

This book abounds with the most signal displays of God's judgments against sin; not only towards the heathen, as Sihon and Og^u, and the Midianites^v, but towards his chosen people. They were burnt by fire; they were destroyed by pestilence^w: the very earth became both their executioner and their grave; and the plague swept them like grass before the scythe^x: all of that generation, who were twenty years old and upwards when they came out of Egypt, perished in the wilderness for their iniquity, except Caleb and Joshua^y. In Micah vi. 4, we read of God saying, "I sent before thee Moses, Aaron, and Miriam:" but even these chosen individuals, if they sinned, were punished; Miriam was struck with leprosy for her sin; Aaron, the saint of the Lord^z, and even Moses, than whom there arose not a greater prophet, were excluded from the promised land for having once spoken unadvisedly with their lips^a. Yet this book no less wonderfully displays the faithfulness of God in the fulfilment of his promise to Abraham, that his seed should be as the stars of heaven; for at the close of their journey, their number was found to be scarcely less than when they went into the wilderness. When Jacob's family entered Egypt, it consisted of only seventy souls^b; but though grievously afflicted in Egypt, and after forty years' wandering in the wilderness, they left that wilderness amounting to more than two millions.

^u Numb. xxi. 21, &c. ^m

^v Numb. xxxi. 1—18. ⁿ

^w Numb. xi. 1—3; xi. 4—35.

^x Numb. xvi. 32, 33, 49; xxv. 9;

with Psalm xc. 6.

^y Numb. xiv. 29, 30.

^z Psalm cvi. 16.

^a Numb. xx. 12.

^b Gen. xlv. 27.

The Psalms lxxviii. cv. cvi. cxxxvi. and 1 Cor. x., suggest much practical improvement from the events recorded in this book.

Preparation made for the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ as a Saviour.

The *facts* of this history, particularly the awful punishments inflicted upon sinners, show man's need of deliverance; while the repeated proofs which are given of man's tendency to sin show his need of spiritual assistance to dispose and enable him to overcome it; but it was reserved to the Gospel dispensation fully to reveal, in the offices of the Son and Holy Spirit, the exact nature of the deliverance and assistance thus required.

Typical persons. The intercession of Moses at Taberah, at Hazeroth for Miriam, and at Kadesh-barnea, as also Aaron's atonement, are very observable. Ch. xi. 2, 3; xii. 13; xiv. 19; xvi. 46, 47.

Typical Things. The circumstances of the Israelites' cure by the brazen serpent form a very illustrious type of Christ, and particularly of his death upon the cross, by which we are redeemed from the sting of death, and the power of the devil. Comp. ch. xxi. 7, with John iii. 14, 15.

Prophecy. Balaam's prophecy of the star to come out of Jacob^c, points to the Bright and Morning Star^d, which through the tender mercy of our God was to visit us: and his mention of the sceptre points to the spiritual kingdom of Him, who must reign till He hath put all enemies under his feet. See 1 Cor. xv. 25.

Particular opposers of God's Church, as the Moabites and Edomites, are, in the language of prophecy, put for adversaries of the Lord in general; and Israel represents the true Church of God.

§ v. *On the Book of* DEUTERONOMY.

Deuteronomy means the "law repeated:" and this fifth and last book of the Pentateuch is so called because it

^c Numb. xxiv. 17.

^d Matt. ii. 2; Luke i. 78; Rev. xxii. 16.

contains a repetition of the law, which was a second time delivered by Moses, with some omissions, additions, and explanations. The omissions are chiefly of such laws as relate to the duties of the Priests and Levites. The additions are such as were peculiarly adapted to their state when just entering the promised land. The explanations tend to illustrate the holiness of heart required by the Mosaic law. As the Book of Leviticus would instruct them in the forms of their worship, so may this book be considered as instructing them in what spirit they should perform it. For instance, chap. x. 16 explained the spiritual intention of circumcision, that it had reference to the purifying of the heart from sin; and (compared with xxx. 6) taught them, while referring all holiness to God's grace, to look for that grace in the diligent use of every means appointed by God for imparting it. (Compare chap. x. 16, and xxx. 6, with Phil. ii. 12, 13.) Though this book is chiefly a repetition of laws, it mentions some facts not recorded in either Numbers or Exodus. See iv. 3, 4; viii. 4; xxix. 5.

The following remarkable particulars may also be noticed in it.

I. It was (with the obvious exception of the last chapter) not only written, but spoken by Moses to all Israel, immediately before his death. The peculiar propriety of so solemn an address appears when we remember, that the generation which had originally heard the Law as delivered from Mount Sinai, with the exception of those under twenty years of age, had now perished in the wilderness.

II. The general outlines of it, if not the whole book, were to be written upon stones, plastered and set up on their entering the promised land—a solemn memento of the terms on which alone they should retain possession of it. Ch. xxvii. 2—8.

III. The king (so far into futurity was Moses permitted to look!) was to write a copy of it with his own hand, and to read therein all the days of his life. Ch. xvii. 18, 19.

IV. It was to be read publicly by the priests every seventh year, at the Feast of Tabernacles, in the hearing of all Israel. Ch. xxxi. 9—13.

V. It was by reference to this book that our Blessed Saviour answered the suggestions of Satan. Comp. Matt. iv. 4. 7. 10, with Deut. viii. 3; vi. 16. 13.

VI. Observe the very important use to be made of the prophetic ode of Moses^e, a portion of Scripture remarkably displaying the attributes of God. Observe also the prophecies uttered in this book concerning the Jewish nation: illustrating the moral use of prophecy, that is, the manner in which God presented the future before men, in order to influence their present conduct. Thus we see here foretold the success of the Israelites as consequent upon their obedience^f; God's blessing on their tribes^g; their apostasy and corruption^h, their punishments, dispersions, and desolationⁱ; the idolatry and captivities of their kings^k; the rapid victories of the Romans^l, represented under the figure of an eagle, which was their standard; an enemy coming from the end of the earth, as in fact Vespasian and Adrian did from Britain, against Jerusalem (see page 29); the miseries to be sustained by them when besieged (compare Deut. xxviii. 52—58, with 2 Kings vi. 28, 29; as also with the account which the Jewish historian Josephus gives of the taking of Jerusalem by the Romans); and their present conduct and condition, as exhibited to our own observation^m. This prophetic view of the whole history of the Jews, from their first redemption after the Egyptian bondage until their final conversion to Christianity, would not only prove a continual evidence to the Jews of the Divine mission of their great lawgiver, but is a confirmation of the inspiration of the Scriptures, and a most instructive display of the providence of God to every age of the Church.

VII. Compare chap. xviii. 15, &c. with John i. 45; vi. 14. Acts iii. 22; vii. 37. The Advent of the Messiah is here more explicitly foretold than in the preceding books, as the completion of the Mosaic dispensation. The preparation which this prophecy made for the coming of Christ remarkably appears in the expectation of the Samaritansⁿ, who admitted no other books as inspired than those of the Pentateuch, but who to this day ground their expectation of the Messiah on this prophecy. (See

^e Deut. xxxii. with xxxi. 19. 21.

^f Deut. xi. 22—25; xxx. 7—10.

^g Deut. xxxiii. 6—26.

^h Deut. xxxi. 27—29.

ⁱ Deut. iv. 26, 27.

^k Deut. xxviii. 36, with 2 Kings xvii. 4—8; Jer. lii. 11.

^l Deut. xxviii. 49—52.

^m Deut. xxviii. 59, &c.

ⁿ John iv. 25.

Jowett's Christian Researches in Syria and the Holy Land.)

Ch. xxi. 22, 23. By comparing the law here given with Gal. iii. 13, we find that it had a prophetic allusion to Christ, who was hanged on a tree, and made a curse for us. What a mystery of love is man's redemption^o! who can estimate the guilt of rejecting it^p!

These and other prophecies of Moses form an irresistible evidence of the Divine authority under which he acted and wrote.

But he was enabled to appeal to other evidence—that of miracles.

§ vi. *The Miracles of Moses.*

A miracle is an alteration of the established course of nature. By the course of nature is meant that course according to which it is observed from experience that God usually acts, and which from its regularity is called the *established* course of nature. This course so established, man by his own power cannot alter. But Moses did alter that course; and there are two considerations connected with his miracles well worthy of attention.

I. *He could not have any worldly motive for deceiving either himself or others with respect to them.*

The attachment of Moses to the people of Israel, on whose behalf he wrought his miracles, had occasioned him the loss of every thing dear to worldly ambition. In refusing to be called the son of Pharaoh's daughter, he had renounced honour, wealth, pleasure^q; and so great were his cares and dangers, as leader of the Israelites, that nothing short of the fullest conviction of his acting by Divine authority could have led him to bear the weight of such a charge. Even under the influence of this solemn obligation, there were times, when in the bitterness of his soul, he entreated to be released from his painful pre-eminence. Numb. xi. 14, 15.

II. Again; as Moses had no motive for deception, so *it was impossible that those among whom he wrought his miracles could be deceived by them.*

^o Eph. iii. 18, 19.

^q Heb. xi. 24—27.

^p Heb. ii. 3; x. 29.

Nothing short of the fullest conviction that his miracles were wrought by God could have induced the Jews to obey Moses. The laws he imposed were very burdensome, purposely opposed to the dictates of their corrupt nature, and the idolatrous habits they had contracted in Egypt: and (as we might have supposed under the circumstances) they were constantly rebelling against him, and showing a disposition to return to Egypt whenever disasters overtook them^r. The most formidable conspiracies were raised against him^s; nor had he any human means, any standing army, any large party on his side, to enforce obedience^t. He sometimes stood alone. A most striking instance of this is seen in the circumstance of his denouncing punishment on the whole nation for murmuring at the report of the spies^u. On the very borders of the promised land, and when the people were in a state of rebellion against him, Moses commanded them never to attempt to enter Canaan. He declared he would march and counter-march them for forty years in the wilderness, that “waste howling wilderness^v ;” and that all who were then capable of bearing arms should perish. For forty years he did thus march and counter-march them. Two-and-forty of such journeyings are mentioned in Numb. xxxiii. And the people submitted. They never cast him off, but held him in the highest reverence (see Deut. xxxiv. 8). How could this be, if his power had not been more than human, and therefore miraculous?

We have thus the testimony of thousands of eye-witnesses to a series of miracles—miracles inseparable from the history—miracles wrought during a period of forty years, and often as judgments on these very witnesses^w. We have a testimony opposed to the inclinations of those who give it, and wrung from their convictions; a testimony from which they have never deviated, and which is confirmed to us by institutions still existing among them. These miracles were wrought by one who also announced a series of prophecies, which, though recorded three thousand

^r Exod. xiv. 11, 12.
Numb. xi. 5; xiv. 3, 4; xx. 5.

^s Numb. xvi. 1—3. 41.

^t Numb. xii. 2.

^u Numb. xiv. 29, &c.

^v Deut. xxxii. 10. See also
Deut. viii. 15.

^w Psalm cvi. 17. 23.
1 Cor. x. 8—10.

years ago, are fulfilling before our eyes at this moment. Surely miracles thus attested must be believed, if we would believe any thing.

Leslie, in his excellent work, entitled, "Short Method with the Deists," has given the four following infallible marks of the reality of a miracle.

First. Were the facts open to men's senses?—i. e. were they of such a nature that men's senses can clearly judge of them?

Secondly. Were they public?

Thirdly. Were public monuments kept up, and some outward actions constantly performed, in memory of the facts, thus publicly wrought?

Fourthly. Were such monuments set up, and such actions and observances instituted, at the very time when those events took place? And were they afterwards continued without interruption?

The first two render it impossible for men at the time to be deceived; the last two, for deception to be practised in after ages.

Let the reader apply these to the miracles and institutions of Moses and our Lord; particularly bearing in mind the Passover, which was commemorated by the Jewish Church from the time of its miraculous deliverance from Egypt; and the Lord's Supper, which, from the resurrection of Christ to the present time, has been commemorated by the Christian Church on the day on which our Saviour rose from the dead.

CHAPTER II.

THE HISTORICAL BOOKS.

CONTENTS.—§ i. *On the Book of Joshua.* § ii. *On the Book of Judges.*
§ iii. *On the Book of Ruth.* § iv. *On the First Book of Samuel.*
§ v. *On the Second Book of Samuel.* § vi. *On the First Book of Kings.*
§ vii. *On the Second Book of Kings.* § viii. *On the two Books of Chronicles.*
§ ix. *On the Book of Ezra.* § x. *On the Book of Nehemiah.* § xi. *On the Book of Esther.*

THE Pentateuch is partly historical; but the leading feature of it, particularly of the last four books, is, that it contains the Law given by God to Moses. The next division of the Old Testament is altogether historical. It comprises twelve books: Joshua, Judges, Ruth, two books of Samuel, two of Kings, two of Chronicles, Ezra, Nehemiah, and Esther. It contains an account of the Jewish Church and nation, from their first settlement in the promised land, after their bondage in Egypt, and their wandering in the wilderness, to their resettlement there after seventy years' captivity in Babylon; including a period of 1042 years, from the death of Moses, A.M. 2553, or B.C. 1451, to the Reformation established by Nehemiah after the return from the captivity, A.M. 3595, or B.C. 409.

The remark made, page 43, that the Old Testament is not, strictly speaking, a history of the Jews, but such a selection from their history by the Holy Spirit, as was best adapted to make men wise unto salvation, admits of abundant illustration in these books. Such political events are brought forward as illustrate the moral state of the times. The reigns of Jeroboam the son of Nebat, and of Ahab, are given at length, because important epochs in the *moral* history of the kingdom of Israel; the one introduced the worship of the two calves, the other that of Baal; and the reign of Ahab was distinguished by the ministry of Elijah. We are told of Hiel building Jericho, because it

shows the daring impiety of the age^x. Immediately after the record of a great political event—the deliverance of three kings and their armies from destruction^y, an instance is given of God's tender care of the widow of an obscure prophet^z, a subject which an ordinary historian would have thought beneath his notice. That which no merely human history could give is here set before us. Men's secret motives are laid bare, stript of the disguises in which they sought to involve them: contrast, for instance, the reason which Jeroboam gave to the Israelites with the true reason of his establishing calves at Dan and Bethel^a: observe also that Haman's pretence for the destruction of the Jews was regard for the public welfare, when the real motive was resentment against Mordecai^b. Often great political events are passed by; for instance, the reign of Jeroboam, the son of Joash, which was longer than that of any other king of Israel, is compressed into a few sentences^c; and details of private life are dwelt upon^d, because they display to us those things which are of most esteem in God's sight, and which it is of most importance for us to know; viz. his attributes, his grace, his providence, &c.; the workings of the human heart, and the nature of men's duties, both to God and their fellow-creatures, in those situations and under those circumstances in which men are usually placed, and most need instruction: while interwoven with the whole may be traced, as the great leading subject, the preparation made for the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ as a Saviour.

§ i. *On the Book of JOSHUA.*

So called, because it relates what was transacted by Joshua, as the successor of Moses in the government of Israel.

It comprehends the history of about thirty years, and may be divided into four parts.

I. God's confirmation of Joshua as the successor of

^x 1 Kings xvi. 34, with
Josh. vi. 26.

^y 2 Kings iii.

^z 2 Kings iv.

^a 1 Kings xii. 26. 28.

^b Esther iii. 8. 5, 6.

^c 2 Kings xiv. 23—28.

^d Ruth; 1 Kings xvii.

Moses, ch. i. God's promise of assistance to Joshua teaches us the use we should make of his promises as encouragements to exert ourselves, making his word our constant study, and only rule of action.

II. An account of the conquest of the land of Canaan, chap. ii.—xii. Joshua had a general knowledge of the country, having formerly been himself a spy^e. He was a man in whom was "the Spirit^f;" he had the promise of success, yet availed himself of every advantage which the use of means could give. He sent spies, disciplined his forces, contrived stratagems. But, though using means, he did not depend upon them. Before attacking the enemies of God and his Church, he solemnly renewed the dedication of himself and his people to God, by the observance of circumcision and the passover^g. His courage was supported by prayer, and God signally blessed it^h. The standing still of the sun and moon, at the prayer of Joshua, is a remarkable illustration of James v. 16. "The good man's prayer," says Ogden, "is among the reasons by which the Omnipotent is moved in the administration of the universe."

It is very important to observe the illustrations afforded, in this conquest, of the honour God puts on faith and obedience: for instance, Rahab staked her life upon God's promises, not fearing the wrath of the king, and thus proved her faith by her worksⁱ. Through her faith salvation came, not only to her, but to her house; she became a wife and mother in Israel, and from her descended David and Christ^k—from her who had been a harlot, who was a Gentile, and of the accursed race of Canaan; and thus she became an earnest of the admission of the Gentile world into the Church of God.

When we read of the awful judgments of God in the destruction of these nations, let us remember their wickedness^l; their apostasy and idolatry was not a mere error in judgment, but sanctioned and encouraged the basest

^e Numb. xiii. 8; xiv. 6.

^f Numb. xxvii. 18.

^g Josh. v.

^h Josh. x. 12—14.

ⁱ Heb. xi. 31.

James ii. 25.

^k Matt. i. 5.

^l Lev. xviii. 24, 25. 30.

Deut. ix. 4; xviii. 10—12.

pollutions, and the most ferocious and unnatural cruelty, which could outrage humanity^m. Consider also the necessity for their extermination from the evil influence which they were likely to exert upon the Israelites, who alone stood forth as the light and hope of the world. (Deut. xx. 18; Numb. xxv. 1—3; xxxi.; 1 Kings xi. 1, &c.) Consider that these nations were the descendants of holy Noah; consider the warnings they had neglected—the deluge; the destruction of the five cities of the plain situated in the very heart of Canaan; the instruction and example of Abraham and the Patriarchs: the plagues of Egypt; the destruction of Pharaoh; the recent destruction of their neighbours, the Eastern Amorites: the miraculous passage of Jordan; the overthrow of Jericho; the faith and preservation of Rahab and her family, &c.; and the convictions of their own consciences. Chap. ii. 9. 24; v. 1.

That God is no respecter of persons, was shown in the punishment of Achan, though an Israelite; and the curses denounced from Mount Ebal. Ch. vii. 25, 26; xxii. 20; viii. 30—35. See Deut. xi. 29; xxvii. 13.

III. The division of the conquered land according to the tribes, ch. xii.—xxii. This kept them distinct, and thus was provision made for the fulfilment of Jacob's prophecy respecting the Messiah springing from Judah. Gen. xlix. 10.

IV. The dying address and counsels of Joshua to the people; their renewal of their covenant; and his death and burial, ch. xxiii. xxiv. As Moses, at the advanced age of 120ⁿ, so Joshua, at that of 110 years, spent his last breath in exhorting the Israelites to a remembrance of God's mercy, and to an observance of his laws^o. The honour of God was the great ruling principle of all his conduct. In this respect compare this warrior and statesman with those whom the world idolizes, that you may not be deceived by the admiration of false glory and false patriotism. Joshua is also a remarkable instance of the honour God puts upon them that honour Him^p, and of the beneficial influence

^m See Graves on the Pentateuch, part iii.; a review of the effects of Judaism, as preparatory to Christianity.

ⁿ Deut. xxxi. 2.

^o Josh. xxiv. 14, &c.

^p Josh. iv. 14.

which one holy man may be permitted to exercise over a whole nation (compare xxiv. 31, with Judges ii. 10). Whoever acts with the resolution of Joshua will share his blessing. Compare ch. xxiv. 15, with Matt. x. 32.

The great subject of this book is God's fulfilment of his promise to Abraham^q, Isaac^r, and Jacob^s, that their posterity should possess the land of Canaan. Their difficulties and sinfulness were great; yet, to the praise of God's grace, Joshua again and again says, "Not one thing hath failed," &c. Ch. xxi. 45; xxiii. 14; Ps. cv. 42—45.

The name of Joshua is the same as Jesus, *a Saviour*^t. Canaan is a type of heaven. The triumphs through faith^u of the Israelites under Joshua may be considered as typical of the final triumph of the Church, and of every Christian, through Jesus the Captain of our salvation^v, the Author and Finisher of our faith^w; while the destruction of the Canaanites is an emblem of that which awaits the world of the ungodly at the judgment of the great day. Ps. cx.; Luke xix. 27.

§ ii. *On the Book of JUDGES.*

This book treats of events intermediate between the death of Joshua and the establishment of regal government, and gives the history of fourteen of those illustrious persons whom, under the name of Judges, God raised up, not in regular succession, but from time to time, to govern Israel, and to deliver them from the oppressions of their enemies. It may be divided into two parts.

I. It gives an account of the further conquests of the Israelites in the land of Canaan, of their disobedience to the command of God, and of their consequent subjection to the king of Mesopotamia. It then states the appointment of Othniel, the first Judge of Israel; and carries on the history to the death of Samson, recording the frequent relapses of the people, their terrible oppressions, and

^q Gen. xiii. 15; xxii. 17.

^r Gen. xxvi. 3.

^s Gen. xxviii. 4.

^t Heb. iv. 8. See marg. refer.

Acts vii. 45.

^u Heb. xi. 29.

^v Heb. ii. 10.

^w Heb. xii. 2.

wonderful deliverances. These events are related in chap. i.—xvi., where the regular history closes, including a period of about 300 years.

II. It contains an appendix, informing us of events which probably happened not long after the death of Joshua; particularly of the introduction of idolatry through Micah, and the consequent corruption of manners, illustrated by the account of the horrible lust of the inhabitants of Gibeah, and the almost utter destruction of the Benjamites for protecting them: presenting, as indeed the whole book does, a fearful view of the corruption of our nature, chap. xvii.—xxi.

Among the topics to be noticed in this book are—

I. *The state of the Israelites before the appointment of the Judges.*—Every man did that which was right in his own eyes^x; and then soon followed idolatry, and insecurity to property and life; showing that there can be neither true religion nor true liberty, but in subjection to civil government. The book of Joshua shows us the blessing which attended union founded on religious principles; the tribes acting together under the command of Joshua, and in the fear of God, were irresistible. The book of Judges shows the reverse of this.

Observe how idolatry began in the worship of the true God under the form of an image, and was introduced by one who thought he had the sanction of God's providence for what he did^y. It, however, soon spread from one family to the whole tribe of Dan, where it continued more than 300 years; for "the captivity of the land," spoken of in ch. xviii. 30, is generally supposed to allude to the taking of the ark, mentioned in 1 Sam. iv. So deceitful is sin, so rapid its progress, so fatal in its consequences!

II. *The issue of worldly friendships.*—The league of the Israelites with the Canaanites issued in that people becoming thorns in their sides, and subjecting them to many grievous oppressions. Ch. ii. 3; iii. 8. 14; iv. 3; vi. 2; x. 8; xiii. 1.

^x Judges xvii. 6.

^y Judges xvii. 13.

Micah's sacrilegious agreement with Jonathan the Levite issued in the Levite robbing Micah of his ephod, &c. Chap. xviii. 20.

The Israelites after the death of Gideon remembered not the Lord their God, neither showed they kindness to the house of Gideon^z; thus instructing us, as Bishop Hall remarks, that if a man have cast off God, he will soon cast off his friend, which is further seen in the case of Abimelech the usurper and his friends the Shechemites. The blood of Gideon's sons is shed by the help of the Shechemites; the blood of the Shechemites is shed by Abimelech, who had thus employed them. Ch. ix. 24.

Samson's marriage-feast with the Philistines was disgraced by fraud in his friend, and treachery in his wife. His connexion with Delilah is a yet more striking illustration of the fact, "that the friendships which are begun in wickedness cannot stand." Bishop Hall.—See 2 Cor. vi. 14—18.

III. *Illustrations*, 1. of man's need of salvation, 2. of the readiness of God to save, and 3. of the manner in which God saves.

1. Man's need of salvation.—As illustrating this, it may be remarked that, with respect to the Canaanites, the manifestations of revealed truth through the laws and religious institutions of the Israelites, and particularly the victories and miracles of Joshua, had no other effect upon them than to induce them to oppose and corrupt the professors of that truth. And with respect to the Israelites, we see them at the very moment they are appointed to be the executioners of God's wrath against idolatry, themselves becoming idolaters, notwithstanding severe punishments for so doing; and we see succeeding generations, through a period of 300 years, relapsing into sin "after the judge died^a." Such is human nature on a large scale. In individual cases, observe the cruelties to which the love of power led Adonibezek^b, and Abimelech^c; as well as the idolatry to which the love of ease led the Israelites.

2. The readiness of God to save.—In illustration of this, see chap. iii. 7, 9, and 12. 15; iv. 1. 3. 23; vi. 1. 7; viii.

^z Judges viii. 33—35.

^a Judges ii. 19.

^b Judges i. 7.

^c Judges ix. 5.

10. 33; x. 15; and xi. 32. That God should say his soul was grieved for the misery of Israel^d, and that for such a people He worked such mighty deliverances, presents to us an astonishing view of his readiness to save. Micah vii. 18—20; Rom. v. 8.

3. The manner in which God saves.—The impenitent Canaanites were not saved. Abimelech, though an Israelite, was cut off in his iniquity^e. Though such deliverers were raised for the Israelites, they were made to feel how evil and bitter a thing it is to sin against God. They were saved in such a manner that the glory of their salvation belonged only to God; that none could vaunt himself, and say, "Mine own hand hath saved me^f." All cause of boasting was taken away, both from the deliverer and from those whom he delivered. According to the principles on which men usually act and think, there was a manifest disproportion between the means used and the effect produced; this was probably done in order that the attention might be especially directed to those points which are usually so overlooked, the importance of faith^g, and the influences of the Spirit of the Lord^h. And thus by these temporal deliverances is shadowed forth to us the manner in which we are saved by Christ. The unbelieving world, and the unholy professor perish; while from those who are saved all boasting is excluded. Faith, and the things of the Spirit, which to the natural man are foolishnessⁱ, God in the Gospel especially honours. That treasure is committed to earthen vessels, that the excellency of the power may be of God^k. And thus is the harmony of the Old and New Testaments remarkably seen, especially in regard to the leading object of both, the making us "wise unto salvation."

§ iii. *On the Book of RUTH.*

This book contains the history of Ruth, a native of Moab, who lived in the time of the Judges. Her son Obed was David's grandfather. It may therefore be considered as an appendix to the book of Judges, which precedes it;

^d Judges x. 16.

^e Judges ix. 53—56.

^f Judges vii. 2.

^g Heb. xi. 32—40.

^h Judges iii. 10; vi. 34; xi. 29; xiii. 25; xiv. 6. 19; xv. 14.

ⁱ 1 Cor. ii. 14.

^k 2 Cor. iv. 7.

and an introduction to the two books of Samuel, which follow it; as the chief subject of those books is David. The book of Ruth contains the origin of David's family, and his descent from Judah (compare ch. iv. 18, with Gen. xxxviii. 29; Matt. i. 3).

Among the topics of this book may be noticed—

I. *The providence of God over individuals.*—The wonders of that providence appear in the means by which God brought about the conversion of Ruth, and her admission into the family of the Messiah, through the famine in Israel, Elimelech's misfortunes, his son's sin in marrying a Moabitess, and her own affliction in becoming a widow; thus does He overrule evil for good. Ps. cxix. 71.

II. *Illustrations of the character and condition of man.*—*Naomi's* afflictions are a striking instance of the changes to which human life is subject. "Ten years," writes Bishop Hall, "have turned Naomi into Mara. What assurance is there of these earthly things, whereof one hour may strip us? What man may say of the years to come, 'Thus I will be?'" But her afflictions exhibit to us her fortitude under them, and give a lustre to her affectionate concern for her daughters-in-law, in the expression of which she shows equal wisdom and tenderness. Mothers-in-law and daughters-in-law may learn much from this story.

Orpah wept but returned to her idols; her good resolutions failed on trial.

Ruth loved Naomi for her piety; her decision seems to have been founded not merely on natural affection, but on religious conviction. Her own declaration, "Thy God shall be my God¹," implied a direct renunciation of idolatry. The testimony of Boaz shows this^m. "O the sure and bountiful payment of the Almighty! Who ever forsook the Moab of this world for the true Israel, and did not at length rejoice in the change?"—Bp. Hall.

III. *Preparation made for the coming of our Lord.*—It has been remarked, that the subject of this book might, at the time it was written, have seemed of so private a nature, that the generality of people might not have thought it worth recording; but we Christians may plainly see the wisdom of God in having preserved it. It had been fore-

¹ Ruth i. 16.

^m Ruth ii. 2.

told to the Jews that the Messiah should be of the tribe of Judahⁿ; and it was afterwards revealed further that He should be of the family of David^o. It was therefore necessary, for the full understanding of these prophecies, that the history of the family of David in that tribe should be written before the prophecies were fulfilled, that so there might not be the least suspicion of fraud or design; and thus this book, these prophecies, and the accomplishment of them, serve to illustrate and explain each other. The adoption into the line of the Messiah, of Ruth, a heathen, a Moabitess^p, seems also to be a pre-intimation of that great mystery, to be revealed under the Gospel, that the Gentiles should be fellow-heirs, and of the same body, and partakers of God's promises in Christ. Eph. iii. 6—9.

§ iv. *On the First Book of SAMUEL.*

The two books of Samuel are also called the First and Second Books of Kings, as being two of those four books which contain the history of the kings of Israel and Judah. The First Book of Samuel contains the account of the change of government from Judges to Kings; including a period of about eighty years, from the birth of Samuel, during the judicature of Eli, to the death of Saul, the first king of Israel.—It may be thus divided:

I. The judicature of Eli, as introductory to our notice of Samuel, ch. i.—iv.

II. The judicature of Samuel, ch. v.—xii.

III. The reign of Saul as introductory to our notice David, ch. xiii.—xxxi.

Among the topics of this book may be noticed, as in other cases, the illustrations it affords of the attributes of God, the character and condition of man, and the preparation made for the coming of our Lord.

I. *The Attributes of God.*

1. *His justice*, in the punishment of sin in Eli, Hophni, and Phineas, the Israelites, the Amalekites, Agag, Saul, and David, the latter of whom invariably increased his

ⁿ Gen. xlix. 10.

^p Deut. xxiii. 3.

^o Jer. xxiii. 5.

difficulties when he sought unlawful means to avoid them, as in the case of Achish. 1 Sam. xxvii. ; xxix. 4.

2. *His readiness to hear prayer*, as in the case of Hannah for herself, and of Samuel for the Israelites. 1 Sam. i. 13—17 ; vii. 9, 10. See also xxiii. 11 ; xxx. 8, comp. with 19, in reference to David.

3. *His providence*.—The first meeting of Saul and Samuel was designed by God the day before^q, but was brought about by circumstances apparently the most accidental and trifling^r. “How far,” as Bishop Hall remarks, “God fetches his purposes about! The asses of Kish, Saul’s father, are strayed away ; what is that to the news of a kingdom? God lays these small accidents for the ground of greater designs.—The asses must be lost, none but Saul must go with his father’s servants to seek them ; Samuel shall meet them in the search ; Saul shall be premonished of his ensuing royalty. Little can we, by the beginning of any action, guess at God’s intention in the conclusion.”

In the preservation also of David from the malice of Saul, there are many illustrations of God’s providence. See, for instance, 1 Sam. xxiii. 26, 27.

II. *The Character and Condition of Man.*

1. *The snare of an easy, amiable temper*.—Eli’s piety is unquestionable ; his resignation under the Divine chastisement is exemplary^s : but his indulgence to his sons^t shows how a good man, by not restraining sin in others^u, may become partaker of their sin and punishment^v, involving even distant generations in suffering^w. Such kindness is cruelty. Prov. xiii. 24.

2. *The consequences of self-will*.—The Israelites casting off such a man as Samuel, wishing to be like the other nations from whom they had suffered so much, and to cast off God^x, by whom they had been so frequently delivered, and still persisting in their wish, though they were warned of the folly of it^y, afford striking instances of the perversity of man’s will.

^q 1 Sam. ix. 15, 16.

^r 1 Sam. ix. 3.

^s 1 Sam. iii. 18 ; iv. 18.

^t 1 Sam. ii. 29.

^u 1 Sam. iii. 13.

^v 1 Sam. ii. 31. 34 ; iv. 11—18.

^w 1 Sam. xxii. 18—20.

1 Kings ii. 27.

^x 1 Sam. viii. 7 ; x. 19.

^y 1 Sam. viii. 19.

Trace, as a warning against the indulgence of self-will, the miseries which followed. Contrast their condition under Samuel, whom God had chosen for them, with their distress at Gilgal and their defeat at Gilboa^z. None of their Judges had ever died in battle.

3. *The danger of trifling with the authority of God's Word.*—Saul's sin in sacrificing at Gilgal^a was the first step to his apostasy and self-murder: and from this we learn, that when once we begin to trifle with the authority of God's law, we know not where we shall stop.

4. *The power of faith.*—Many illustrations of this are afforded by the history of David; as xvii. 37, and xxx. 1—6. Saul had driven him from his country and the Philistines from their camp, the Amalekites had plundered his city, his own people spake of stoning him, but he yet “encouraged himself in the Lord his God.” 1 Sam. xxx. 6.

5. *The character of Samuel.*—Notice his early piety, his obedience and respect for Eli, and his strict regard to truth. 1 Sam. i. 28; iii. 5. 18.

As a minister, observe his earnestness and perseverance in leading men to repentance, and his zeal in teaching them to improve seasons of conviction. 1 Sam. vii. 3.

As a judge, he ruled in the fear of God with unwearied diligence. 1 Sam. vii. 15, 16; xii. 3, 4.

In success, he was grateful to acknowledge, and anxious to preserve memorials of, God's goodness; while under trouble he was diligent in seeking his direction. 1 Sam. vii. 12; viii. 21.

In the reproof and punishment of sin, as in the case of the Israelites and of Saul, he appears altogether raised above the fear of men. 1 Sam. x. 19; xii. 17; xiii. 13.

Exalted to supreme power, he exercised it for twenty years, without ambition, oppression, or avarice; resigning it without reluctance, when his God commanded him. 1 Sam. xii.

So far was he from envying his successor, that he used all his influence to commend him to the people^b, and when he sinned to turn away the Divine anger from him^c. Rejected by his countrymen, he still never ceased to pray for them^d;

^z 1 Sam. vii. 13; xiii. 6—19;

xxx. 7.

^a 1 Sam. xiii. 9—13.

^b 1 Sam. x. 24.

^c 1 Sam. xv. 11.

^d 1 Sam. xii. 23.

and to such an extent did he mourn for Saul as to bring upon himself God's reproof^e. "Those who attend to his life may observe that he was modest without meanness, mild without weakness, firm without obstinacy, and severe without harshness. He lived to the noblest purposes—the glory of God, and the good of his country, and died full of years and honour, universally lamented."—Stackhouse.

III. *Preparation for the Coming of our Lord.*

Samuel was the most famous Prophet after Moses, distinguished^f like him for the prevalence of his intercession^g, and the first of that succession of Prophets^h, the great subject of whose predictions was Christ; David was the greatest personal type of Christⁱ. These considerations account for the prominence given to Samuel and David, and further illustrate how interwoven with the historical part of the Old Testament is the preparation for the coming of Christ.

This book discloses a grand prophecy of Christ, who is^k here for the first time in Scripture spoken of as the Messiah, or Anointed, as also as a king before that office was established among the Israelites. "Who doth not see," saith St. Austin, "that the spirit of Hannah prophesied of the Christian religion, the city of God, whose King and Founder is Christ; and of the grace of God, from which the proud are estranged, but with which the humble are filled?" This indeed is the chief import of this hymn, the words of which are too magnificent to be confined to so low a sense as that of the circumstances which immediately respected Hannah. —See Bishop Patrick on this passage; and compare Hannah's song with that of Mary. Luke i. 46—55.

The character of the Mosaic dispensation, as "a ministration of death," intended to show man his need of a Divine Mediator, is seen in the awful punishment of the men of Bethshemesh for their irreverence and presumption^l. In their inquiry, "Who is able to stand before

^e 1 Sam. xv. 35; xvi. 1.

^f Jer. xv. 1.

^g Psalm cvi. 23.

Numb. xiv. 20, with 1 Sam.
vii. 9.

^h Acts iii. 24.

ⁱ Luke i. 32.

^k 1 Sam. ii. 10.

^l 1 Sam. vi. 19.

this holy Lord God?" they asked a question which the Gospel only can fully answer. Rom. iii. 21—26; 2 Cor. v. 21.

Observe the honour put upon sacrifice^m; as Samuel was offering up the burnt-offering, the Lord smote the Philistines. This also directs our thoughts to Christ, whom such sacrifices typified. Rev. xii. 11.

§ v. *On the Second Book of SAMUEL.*

This book contains the history of the reign of David, occupying a period of nearly forty years. The great importance of the history of David, as a clue to our understanding so many parts of Scripture, particularly the Psalms, seems to demand a fuller notice of him than of any other person in the Old Testament.

It may be remarked, that David was crowned king at Jerusalem rather more than a thousand years before our Lord's birth, and reigned over all the tribes as many years as our Lord lived on earth—about thirty-two or thirty-three years.

I. He made Jerusalem the seat of his kingdom, part of which (the fort of Zion) till his reign was possessed by the Jebusites.

II. He subdued the Philistines, Edomites, Amalekites, Moabites, Ammonites, and Syrians; and extended his kingdom to the uttermost bound of that land, which had been promised to the seed of Abraham, but had never hitherto been possessed by them.

Among the topics to be noticed in this book, are,—

I. *The triumphs of David.*—As in the First Book of Samuel we observe David's forbearance towards Saul, so in this book and after the death of Saul, is seen his anxiety that every step he took towards the possession of the kingdom should be directed by Godⁿ. It has been remarked, that in a civil war of seven years' continuance, which followed upon Saul's death, David never once lifted his sword against a subject; and at the end of it, he punished no rebel, he remembered no offence but the murder of his rival^o. The spoils of war he dedicated to God^p. His first

^m 1 Sam. vii. 10.

ⁿ 2 Sam. ii. 1.

^o 2 Sam. iv. 10—12.

^p 2 Sam. viii. 11.

concern, when established on his throne, was to promote the honour of God ^q, and the religious welfare of his people. He thus expresses his earnestness to build a temple,—“I will not give sleep to mine eyes, or slumber to mine eyelids, until I find out a place for the Lord, a habitation for the mighty God of Jacob.” Ps. cxxxii. 4, 5.

II. *The troubles of David.*—These followed upon his grievous fall, and are the more remarkable as viewed in connexion with his deep repentance. In reference to which, the following points are to be observed:

1. His respect for his reprover. How different his conduct to Nathan from that of Herod to John the Baptist! David afterwards called one of his own children by the prophet's name ^r, and showed confidence in him as long as he lived ^s. 2. His unreserved confession. How different was the conduct of Adam and Eve ^t, and Saul ^u! 3. His deep humiliation before God and man. This is seen in his earnest prayer for the infant's life; and in Ps. li. 4, “Against thee, thee only have I sinned,” &c.—words most expressive of godly sorrow; this psalm he not only wrote but published, and that after he had received the assurance of forgiveness, 2 Sam. xii. 13. 4. The resignation of his after-life under the heavy chastisements of the Almighty. See xv. 25, &c.

III. *His heavy punishments.*—The death of his infant ^v; Amnon's crime and death; Absalom's murder of his brother Amnon; rebellion, and its multiplied evils; his own flight from Jerusalem ^w; the cursing of Shimei ^x; the treachery of Ahithophel, his own familiar friend ^y; the death of Absalom, his darling child, who was cut off in his iniquity ^z; the revolt of Sheba ^a; “the sword never departing from his house ^b.” Who will dare to make David's fall an excuse for sin, when it was so severely punished even after such repentance? 1 Pet. iv. 18.

IV. *David's restoration to his throne.*—Again we are called to review his renewed concern for the promotion of

^q 2 Sam. vi. 1—5; vii. 1, 2.

^r 1 Chron. iii. 5.

^s 1 Kings i. 24. 27. 32—34.

^t Gen. iii. 12, 13.

^u 1 Sam. xv. 20, 21.

^v 2 Sam. xii. 19.

^w 2 Sam. xv. 30.

^x 2 Sam. xvi. 5—8.

^y Psalm xli. 9.

^z 2 Sam. xviii. 33.

^a 2 Sam. xx. 2.

^b 2 Sam. xii. 10.

God's honour. (xxii. xxiii. 1—5 ; see also 1 Chron. xxviii. xxix.) Yet again also is he betrayed into sin, by numbering his people^c, which showed a disposition to put his trust in men rather than God. By the display of this tendency to sin in the best men, the need of the dispensation of the Gospel is strongly implied.

The most remarkable prophecies in this book respecting the promised Messiah are to be found in vii. 12—16 ; xxiii. 5 : and by comparing these passages with Heb. i. 5, and with Acts ii. 30, it will be found that the sure mercies of David refer to our Lord. It is particularly to be observed, that David *knew* that God had sworn to him to raise up out of his family Christ, whose throne should be established for ever ; and we may presume, from the declarations he elsewhere makes of his confident expectation of a future state of happiness^d, that the assurance of everlasting salvation, which God had given him, as one of those who believed in the promised Saviour, was his great support under the disappointments of life, and in the immediate prospect of death.

The insufficiency of repentance alone, however sincere and deep^e, and God's acceptance of sacrifice, as the divinely appointed means of removing his anger, is remarkably seen in ch. xxiv. 25, as compared with 1 Chron. xxi. 26, 27. The Lord answered David's prayer by fire from heaven upon the altar of burnt-offering, and commanded the angel to put up his sword again into the sheath. Thus is the anger of God turned away from penitent sinners by the sacrifice of Christ ; and thus is another illustration afforded, how the historical parts of the Old Testament shadow forth the doctrinal parts of the New.

§ vi. *On the First Book of KINGS.*

This book embraces a period of about one hundred and twenty-six years, from the anointing of Solomon, and his admission as a partner in the throne of David, to the death of Jehoshaphat. It may be divided into two principal parts.

I. The history of the *undivided* kingdom under Solomon, ch. i.—xi.

^c 2 Sam. xxiv.

^e 2 Sam. xxiv. 10. 17.

^d Psalm xvii. 15.

II. The history of the *divided* kingdom; the tribes of Judah and Benjamin forming the kingdom of Judah, under Rehoboam, the son of Solomon, and his successors; and the ten tribes that of Israel under Jeroboam, the son of Nebat, and his successors, ch. xii.—xxii.

After this division the ten tribes continued two hundred and fifty-four years, under nineteen kings, all of whom were idolaters. Yet to them were sent Elijah and Elisha; so unwilling is God to punish the wicked ^f. The kingdom of Judah continued three hundred and eighty-eight years, under twenty kings of the line of David, of whom Asa, Jehoshaphat, Jothan, Hezekiah, and Josiah, were pious; and Manasseh a penitent.

The history of these thirty-nine kings is so given as to show mankind the certainty of the fulfilment of God's promises and threatenings; and especially that righteousness exalts a nation, and sin ruins it. Compare Levit. xxvi. 30, with 1 Kings xiii. 2; 2 Kings xxiii. 8; also Deut. xxviii. 53, with 2 Kings vi. 28, &c., and Levit. xxvi. 31, with 2 Kings xxv. 9.

The fulfilment of prophecies spoken many hundred years before is a pledge to us that those prophecies also will be fulfilled which speak of the dead, small and great, standing before God, and being judged, every man according to his works. Rev. xx. 12; 2 Pet. iii. 11—14.

Among the topics to be noticed in this book, are—

1. *The reign of Solomon*,—the most distinguished feature of which was the building and dedication of the temple, and the solemn possession which God took of it. “Let us imagine to ourselves,” as Bishop Horne remarks, “a building where scarce any thing appeared less valuable than silver and gold; a building of which God Himself condescended to be the Architect ^g, and which had therefore in the design and execution all the perfection that Infinite Wisdom could give it. Before this building, let us think we see the nation of the Israelites assembled, encircling their king seated upon an exalted throne of burnished brass, with all the ensigns of majesty and royalty; whilst, amid the harmony of different kinds of instruments, with the acclamations of a whole people joining in a grand

^f Ezek. xxxiii. 11.

^g 1 Chron. xxviii. 12. 19.

chorus of praise and thanksgiving, the glory of Jehovah, or a body of light above the brightness of the sun, descends from heaven and fills the temple. Imagination can hardly reach the amazing idea. But this is the scene described by the sacred writer in 2 Chron. v. 11—14. Never after this let us entertain low notions of God, or of the house where his honour dwelleth. And let us not think that He is less present with us than He was with Israel. Is the Christian Church less favoured than the Jewish Church was? Have we lost any thing by the Incarnation of his Son? Surely not. He hath declared, "Where two or three are gathered together in my name, there am I in the midst^h." Seeing then that we have a great High Priest that is passed into the heavens, Jesus the Son of God, let us therefore come boldly unto the throne of grace, having boldness to enter into the holiest by his blood. Heb. iv. 14; x. 19. See also Eph. ii. 21, 22.

The grievous fall of Solomon has already been slightly noticed, and forms the most striking instance on record of the insufficiency of the highest endowments to preserve man from the grossest folly and sinⁱ. He found also, as all will find, that the way of transgressors is hard. 1 Kings xi. 14. 23. 26.

II. *The rebellion of the ten tribes under Jeroboam, and the consequent division of the nation into two kingdoms.*

Jeroboam presents a striking contrast to David. God raised him to regal power^k, and solemnly promised He would make his throne as secure as that of David^l. But Jeroboam did not trust in God, as David did, for the accomplishment of his promises. In violation of God's command^m, which had appointed to the twelve tribes one temple, one priesthood, and one altar, at Jerusalem, he introduced the worship of God by images at Dan and Bethel. The difference of the issues in the cases of David and Jeroboam is very remarkable. For nearly 500 years the throne of Judah was preserved hereditary in the family of David: but the destruction of Jeroboam's family almost immediately after his death, and that of the kingdom of Israel

^h Matt. xviii. 20.

ⁱ John xv. 5.

^k 1 Kings xi. 31.

^l 1 Kings xi. 38.

^m Deut. xii. 5.

2 Chron. vii. 12.

more than 200 years after, is traced to this sinⁿ, the motive to which was, that it would *establish* him and his kingdom. Thus foolish is worldly wisdom, and thus is illustrated what Holy Writ has declared, that “there is a way which seemeth right unto a man, but the end thereof are the ways of death^o.” “A man shall not be established by wickedness^p.” “Righteousness keepeth him that is upright in the way, but wickedness overthroweth the sinner^q.”

III. *The typical nature of the history of the Old Testament.*—Solomon’s reign, the most peaceful, prosperous, and glorious of the Jewish history, is also referred to by the sacred writers as shadowing forth in these respects the reign of the Messiah. See Ps. lxxii.

IV. *The moral use of prophecies not immediately referring to Christ.*—This is illustrated by a consideration of the very critical period in which God raised up the prophet of Judah^r, who was sent to Jeroboam not merely to certify (as Davison remarks) the future fact that the altar should be defiled, but to set a mark upon that sin which he calls the original sin of the ten tribes, which was nothing short of their adoption of a system of open idolatry as their national established religion. The punishment of the prophet would add great force to his warning; for Jeroboam might have reflected, in the words of the apostle, “If the righteous scarcely are saved, where shall the ungodly and sinner appear?” The prophecies and ministry of Elijah and Elisha are to be viewed in the same light—as called forth by the increasing iniquities of the ten tribes, to warn them of their danger, and thus to display at once both the long-suffering and the holiness of God.

The punishment of Hiel was also calculated to produce the same effect. It was the execution of a threat pronounced more than 500 years before^s, and being fulfilled in all its circumstances, was an awful warning to the whole nation, that the threatening of Ahijah as to their captivity^t would certainly be fulfilled, if they continued impenitent.

ⁿ 1 Kings xiv. 9, 10.
² Kings xvii. 21—23.
^o Prov. xiv. 12.
^p Prov. xii. 3.

^q Prov. xiii. 6.
^r 1 Kings xiii.
^s 1 Kings xvi. 34; Josh. vi. 26.
^t 1 Kings xiv. 15.

§ vii. *On the Second Book of Kings.*

This is a continuation of the first book, and describes the government and actions of many successive kings of Judah and Israel, from the death of Jehoshaphat, A.M. 3115, to the destruction of Jerusalem and of the temple, A.M. 3416. It may be divided into two principal parts.

I. The contemporary history of the kingdoms of Judah and Israel, to the end of that of Israel in its captivity by Shalmaneser, king of Assyria, ch. i.—xvii.

II. The history of the decline and fall of the kingdom of Judah, and its captivity by Nebuchadnezzar, king of Babylon, ch. xviii.—xxv.

In tracing the decline and fall of idolatrous Israel, an awful illustration is afforded of the fearful consequences of sin. Zachariah, the son of Jeroboam the Second, after a reign of six months, is killed by Shallum, who, after a reign of one month, is killed by Menahem; his son and successor, Pekahiah is assassinated by Pekah, who is himself put to death by Hoshea.

The preservation and continued pre-eminence of Judah, and of the family of David, shows very remarkably the finger of Providence preparing for the coming of the Messiah, as foretold by prophecy^u. While in the short period of 254 years the crown of Israel passed through nine different families, viz. those of Jeroboam, Baasha, Zimri, Omri, Jehu, Shallum, Menahem, Pekah, Hoshea; the crown of Judah was preserved in the family of David 388 years, though at times the utmost efforts were made to exterminate it. Notice Rehoboam's danger from Shishak^v, Abijah's from Jeroboam^w, that of Asa from Zerah^x, &c. &c.; but particularly Athaliah's attempt to destroy "all the seed royal^y."

The preservation of the house of David is the more remarkable from the great wickedness of many of that family, as Jehoram, Ahaziah, Ahaz, Amon; see 2 Chron. xxi. 7. See also Psalm lxxxix. 28—35; Luke i. 69—73.

^u Gen. xlix. 10.

Isaiah xi. 10.

^v 2 Chron. xii. 9.

^w 2 Chron. xiii. 3.

^x 2 Chron. xiv. 9.

^y 2 Kings xi. 1—3.

Nor is it to be forgotten, that though the two Books of Kings do not contain direct prophecies of Christ, yet during this period of their history, (particularly from the time of Jeroboam the Second,) the prophets principally flourished, and to Christ "give all the prophets witness." Acts x. 43.

The importance attached to the passover in the revival of religion by Hezekiah^z, and Josiah^a, is very observable, because that feast more than any other, pointed to Christ. 1 Cor. v. 7.

Of the many prophecies fulfilled in this book^b, the most remarkable is that respecting Josiah. (Compare 1 Kings xiii. 3, with 2 Kings xxiii. 15—20.) The prediction was delivered above 300 years before Josiah was born, yet during all these years, no one gave his son the name, or assumed it himself, or attempted to fulfil the prophecy, until the appointed time arrived, and then Amon, a wicked prince, named his son Josiah, who himself does not appear to have been aware of the prophecy till after he had fulfilled it^c.

Miracles, &c., of Elijah and Elisha.

The great importance of their ministry is attested by the number of their miracles and prophecies. Elijah raised the dead^d, opened and shut heaven^e, and fetched down fire and water with his prayer^f: he was the most illustrious prophet since the days of Moses, both in word and deed, and in the mode of his removal from this world, even more honoured than Moses. Elisha parted

^z 2 Chron. xxx.

^a 2 Chron. xxxv.

^b The undesigned fulfilment of prophecy, i. e. the various instances recorded in Scripture of people fulfilling God's prophecies, without any intention on their part, is a deeply interesting subject, and would afford a very profitable exercise to the young. See 1 Kings xxii. 34; 2 Kings ix. 34—37; and Luke ii. 4, from which it appears that the decree of Cæsar Augustus, bringing Mary to Bethlehem, caused the fulfilment of Micah v. 2. "The apparently casual utterance of the word Galilee" (Luke xxiii. 5) by the Jewish crowd when they accused Jesus before Pilate, gave occasion to Pilate to send Him to Herod, by which "event the mystery was fulfilled, that He should be judged both by the Jews and the Gentiles. A mere accident, as far as we see, led to the fulfilment of the predetermined mystery."—Pascal.

^c See a similar instance in 2 Kings ix. 21. 26. 36, with 1 Kings xxi. 23.

^d 1 Kings xvii. 22.

^f 1 Kings xviii. 1; xvii. 1.

^e 1 Kings xviii. 42—45.

James v. 17, 18.

2 Kings i. 10.

the waters of Jordan ^g; healed the bad waters of Jericho ^h; brought destruction on forty-two youths of the idolatrous inhabitants of Bethel ⁱ; foretold the miraculous supply of water to Jehoshaphat in the wilderness of Edom ^k; multiplied the widow's oil to pay her debt, and then to maintain her ^l; by his prayers procured a son for the rich and hospitable Shunammite ^m, and when the child died restored it to life again ⁿ; cured the poisonous pottage in the course of the seven years' famine which he foretold ^o; entertained a hundred men with twenty loaves ^p; cured Naaman the Syrian, and transferred his leprosy to the covetous and lying Gehazi, his own servant ^q; made an iron hatchet to rise from the bottom of the water into which it had fallen ^r; discovered the secret counsels of Benhadad; by his prayer caused Benhadad's army to be smitten with blindness, and his own servant's eyes to be opened that he might see the angelic hosts which guarded him ^s; foretold abundance on the morrow to Samaria, when besieged and in the extremity of famine ^t; and predicted the death of Benhadad, as well as the cruelty and wickedness of Hazael ^u.

But the last miracle connected with Elisha, as Hales remarks, was the most extraordinary of all; a dead man was restored to life by only touching the bones of this prophet in his sepulchre ^x. "This miracle," observes the same writer, "was the immediate work of God, and concurred with the translation of Elijah to keep alive and confirm, in a degenerate and infidel age, the grand truth of a *bodily resurrection*, which the translation of Enoch was calculated to produce in the antediluvian world, and which the resurrection of Christ, in a glorified body, fully illustrated." See Hales, vol. ii. p. 397.

"There are three bodily inhabitants of heaven, Enoch, Elijah, our Saviour Christ: the first before the law; the second under the law; the third under the Gospel: all three in a several form of translation. Our Blessed Saviour

^g 2 Kings ii. 14.

^h 2 Kings ii. 19—22.

ⁱ 2 Kings ii. 23, 24.

^k 2 Kings iii. 17.

^l 2 Kings iv. 1—7.

^m 2 Kings iv. 8—17.

ⁿ 2 Kings iv. 18—37.

^o 2 Kings iv. 38—41; viii. 1.

^p 2 Kings iv. 42—44.

^q 2 Kings v. 1—27.

^r 2 Kings vi. 1—7.

^s 2 Kings vi. 8—23.

^t 2 Kings vi. vii.

^u 2 Kings viii. 7—15.

^x 2 Kings xiii. 20, 21.

Ecclus. xlviii. 12—14.

raised Himself to and above the heavens by his own immediate power: He ascended as the Son, they as servants; He as God, they as creatures. Elijah ascended by the visible ministry of angels, Enoch insensibly. Wherefore, O God, hast Thou done this, but to give us a taste of what we shall be; to let us see that heaven was never shut to the faithful; to give us an assurance of the future glorification of this mortal and corruptible part? Even thus, O Saviour, when Thou shalt descend from heaven with a shout, with the voice of the archangel, and with the trump of God, we that are alive and remain shall be caught up, together with the raised bodies of thy saints, into the clouds, to meet Thee in the air, to dwell with Thee in glory.”—Bp. Hall.

§ viii. *On the two Books of CHRONICLES.*

These books were written after the return of the Jews from the Babylonish captivity, and are called Chronicles because they contain an abstract, in the order of time, of the whole sacred history to the period when they were written, including about 3468 years.

One leading object of the writer, who was probably Ezra, appears to have been to point out from the public records, still preserved, the state of the different families before the captivity, that at their return they might again possess their respective inheritances. That the worship of God might be conducted as before, he enters minutely into the duties, genealogies, families, and orders of the Priests and Levites; and to stir the Jews to a holy zeal for restoring the temple and its service, he dwells on those parts of the character of David, Solomon, Hezekiah, and Josiah, which illustrate their pious care in these respects.

The First Book of Chronicles may be divided into three parts:

I. Genealogies from Adam to the time of Ezra, with short historical notices intermixed, ch. i.—ix.

II. The history of Saul, with immediate reference to the translation of the kingdom from him to David, ch. x.

III. The history of David, in which is an enlarged account of the regulations he made with regard to the public worship of God, such as fixing the order of the Priests and Levites, their various duties, &c., and the preparation made for building the temple, ch. xi.—xxix.

In the effect of David's liberality, particularly if we observe the spirit in which he gave^y, may be seen the influence which a good example has on others. Precepts may lead, but examples draw.

The concluding scenes of David's life, as recorded in this book, especially his solemn farewell to Solomon and his subjects, throw great light and lustre on his character, as the man after God's own heart; pre-eminently zealous for the glory of God, his worship and service, and ascribing all that was good in himself, both as to act and intention, entirely to God's grace. The higher are our views of God, the more lowly shall we think of ourselves. In proportion to our gratitude will be our humility. 1 Chron. xxix. 13, 14.

One important use of the genealogical tables is to give that succession of families through which it had been prophesied that the Messiah was to come. Hence the descendants of Abraham, Isaac, Jacob, and David, are marked with the greatest care. It is a very striking fact, that while the Jews were most careful to preserve the succession of their families, from the beginning of their history to the time of our Lord's coming, no genealogies have since been kept which can in any measure be depended upon: the providence of God, even in this particular, proving Jesus to be the Christ; for it is rendered impossible that any person since our Lord's coming, could prove himself to be of that tribe, to which prophecy had limited the Messiah.

The Second Book of Chronicles begins with the reign of Solomon and the building of the temple, and contains a history of about 480 years, till the return from Babylon. It coincides very much with the first and second Books of Kings, except that, as in them the history of Judah and Israel were mixed together, in this we have scarcely any thing but the history of David's descendants, much of which we had not before.

As an illustration of the importance of comparing these two Books with the Books of Kings, and the writings of the Prophets, in order to have a just view of the characters described, it may be remarked, that the Books of Chronicles give no account of Solomon's apostasy; and the Books of Kings no account of Manasseh's repentance.

Again, in 2 Chron. xxxiv. 32, 33, referring to the reign

^y 1 Chron. xxix. 14.

of Josiah, it is said that "the inhabitants of Jerusalem did according to the covenant of God, the God of their fathers;" and again, "all his days they departed not from following the Lord God of their fathers." This was a very remarkable change from the state of wickedness into which they had previously plunged during the reign of Amon. But the description here given requires some qualification: for from Jer. iii. 10, and other parts of the first twelve chapters of his prophecy, delivered during this reign, we learn that with regard to many it was but an external obedience, a restraint upon, not a change of disposition, an hypocrisy which threw off its mask as soon as Josiah died. These passages of Jeremiah also explain 2 Kings xxiii. 26, where it is said that notwithstanding Josiah's piety, and the extent to which he carried the reformation, "The Lord turned not from the fierceness of his great wrath."

A COMPARATIVE VIEW OF THE REIGNS OF THE KINGS OF JUDAH AND ISRAEL.²

Script. Reference.	KINGS OF JUDAH.	Beginn. to reign.	Length of reign.	Script. Reference.	KINGS OF ISRAEL.	Beginn. to reign.	Length of reign.
1 Kings xi.	<i>Rehoboam</i> , son of Solomon	975	17y.	1 Kings xii.	<i>Jeroboam</i>	975	22y.
— xii.	Revolt of ten tribes.....	975		— xiii.	Idolatry of the golden calves	975	
2 Chr. xii.	Temple plundered by Shishak.....	971			Warned by the prophet Judah, and again by the prophet Ahijah, yet persisting in his idolatry		
1 Kings xv.	<i>Abijah</i> , or <i>Abijam</i>	958	3	2 Chr. xiii.	<i>Jeroboam's</i> miserable death	954	
2 Chr. xiii.	Victory over Jeroboam, but his heart not perfect with God	957		1 Kings xv.	<i>Nadab</i> , son of Jeroboam.....	954	1
1 Kings xv.	<i>Asa</i>	955	41		Utter destruction of family of Jeroboam.....	953	
	His heart perfect with the Lord all his days, even deposing his grandmother Maachah for her idolatry.....				<i>BAASHA</i>		
2 Chr. xiv.	Victory over Zerah	941			Persisting in the sins for which he was raised up to destroy the house of Jeroboam.....	953	23
— xv.	Covenant with God			— xvi	<i>Elah</i> , son of Baasha	930	1
1 Kings xv.	His league with Benhadad.....	920		12.	Murdered in his drunkenness by Zimri, who destroys all the house of Baasha, as foretold ...	929	
2 Chr. xvi.	Misconduct under Hanani's reproof—diseased in his feet, yet seeks not to the Lord, but to the physicians				<i>ZIMAI</i>		
1 Kings xv.	<i>Jehoshaphat</i>	914	25		Destroys himself by setting fire to his palace after seven days' reign.—The kingdom then split into two factions	928	7 d.
2 Chr. xvii.	His heart lifted up in the ways of the Lord—great earnestness for the religious instruction of his people				<i>OMRI</i>		
— xviii.	The great error of his reign his affinity with Ahab, in marrying his eldest son Jehoram to Athaliah the daughter of Ahab and Jezebel—from which follows his expedition to Ramoth-Gilead, which nearly cost him his life...	897			Engaged in a civil war with Tibni for six years, when Tibni is put to death, and Omri reigns alone		
1 Kings xxii.	His joining Ahaziah to go to Ophir, which involves the destruction of his fleet	896			Builds Samaria.....	925	12y.
	His joining Jehoram and the king of Edom against the Moabites, which, but for the miracle wrought by Elisha, would have led to the destruction of their three armies for want of water..	895		— xvii.	<i>Ahab</i> , son of Omri	924	
2 Kings iii.	His prosperous reign closes with a signal deliverance by the Lord from the Moabites	895			Outstrips his father's idolatry through the influence of his wife Jezebel	917	20
2 Chr. xx. 1—25.				— xviii.	<i>Elijah</i> foretels a famine—raises the widow's son	910	
				— xxi.	<i>Elijah's</i> sacrifice and destruction of prophets of Baal	906	
				2 Kings i.	Seizure of Naboth's vineyard	899	
					<i>Ahaziah</i> , son of Ahab	897	
					The persecutor of Elijah.....		
					<i>Jehoram</i> , brother of Ahaziah, and son of Ahab.....	896	

(2) The following dates may be given as introductory to this table:—

SAUL reigned from a.c. 1025 to B.C. 1055 | SOLOMON reigned from B.C. 1015 to B.C. 976
DAVID — 1055 — 1015 | The Temple was dedicated 1004

Script. Reference.	KINGS OF JUDAH.	Begins to reign.	Length of reign.	Script. Reference.	KINGS OF ISRAEL.	Begins to reign.	Length of reign.
2 Chr. xxi.	Jehoram, son of Jehoshaphat Murders his six brothers, com- pels his subjects to commit idolatry, is punished by the re- volt of the Edomites (fulfilling Isaac's prophecy, Gen. xxvii. 40), the invasion of the Philis- tines, Arabians, &c., and by an agonizing, lingering disease, of which he dies unlamented	892	7y.	2 Kings ii. — vi. — ix.	Eljah taken up to heaven Siege of Samaria..... Jehoram killed in the field of Naboth by Jehu	896 893 884	
2 Kings viii.	Ahaziah, grandson of Jehoshaphat. Follows the evil counsels of his mother, engaged with his uncle Jehoram against Hazael, in which he is wounded and af- terwards slain by Jehu	885		— x. Hosea i. 4.	Jehu Destroys the prophets of Baal, and for this his family are permitted to inherit the throne longer than any other of the kings of Israel; but though thus rewarded with temporal blessing for a partial obedience, his deceit and cruelty are not overlooked, and continuing to maintain the worship of the golden calves, he is stripped of his dominions eastward of Jordan.....	884	28y.
2 Chr. xxii. 1—9.	ATHALIAH, daughter of Ahab, widow of Jehoram, and mother of Ahaziah	885	1				
2 Chr. xxii.	Usurps the throne, and but for the rescue of the infant Joash, by his aunt, the wife of Jehoiada, would have succeed- ed in the murder of the whole royal family of David.....	884	6	2 Kings xiii.	Jehoahaz, son of Jehu Israel heavily oppressed by the Syrians; the king's prayer un- der his affliction..... Jehoash associated with his father Jehoash—Begins to reign alone..... Visits Elisha on his death-bed— smites the Syrians twice ac- cording to the prophecy of Elisha, thus also fulfilling the prayer of his father	857 841 839	17 14
2 Kings xl. 2 Chr. xxiii.	Joash, or Jehoahaz, son of Ahaziah. Anointed king, and Athaliah slain Repairs the temple	878 856	40				
2 Chr. xxiv.	Apostasy after the death of Je- hoiada, whose son he murders in the house of the Lord, but his blood is required at his hand. Hazael defeated him, he was af- flicted with great diseases, and slain by his own servants.....			— xiv. 23, &c.	Jeroboam II Under whom the kingdom at- tains its height of glory—the downfall of the kingdom of Israel most rapid after his death—a constant succession of prophets from Samuel, as Nathan, Gad, Hanani, Mi- caiah, Jehu, Elijah, Elisha, but none leave any writings till about this reign, when Jonah, Hosea, Amos, prop- hesy in Israel contemporary with Joel and Isaiah in Judah. Interregnum	825	4
2 Kings xiv.	Amaziah Begins well, ends badly..... Enabled by God to overcome the Edomites without the help of the Israelites, he yet forsakes God, and seeks after the gods of the Edomites.—In the pride of conquest he challenges Jeho- ash, and is overcome—the tem- ple and his palace are pillaged. Murdered by his own servants, and an interregnum follows ..	839	29				
2 Chr. xxv.	Azariah, or Uzziah A striking illustration of the dan- ger of prosperity to a good man —invades the priests' office— smitten with leprosy and dies a leper..... Joel and Isaiah prophesy in his reign.....	810	52	— xv.	Zachariah, fourth and last in de- scendant from Jehu, as foretold, 2 Kings x. 30	784 773	
2 Chron. xxvi.	Joel and Isaiah prophesy in his reign.....	765			Murdered by Shallum..... SHALLUM, who in a month is killed by	772	1 m.
Isa. vi.	The year of his death is distin- guished by Isaiah's remarkable vision of the glory of Christ ...				MENAHEN Pekahiah, son of Menahem	772	10y.
2 Chron. xxvii.	Jotham Mighty because he prepared his way before the Lord, but the people do yet corruptly. He is the only king of Judah who has not some evil laid to his charge Micah begins to prophesy	758	16	— xv. 29.	Murdered by Pekah	761	2
2 Chron. xxviii.	Ahaz Very wicked—shuts up the tem- ple—burns his children in the fire to Moloch, &c.—his reign very calamitous	742	16	1 Chron. v. 26.	Reuben, Gad, and half the tribe of Manasseh, which dwell be- yond Jordan, taken captive by Tiglath-pileser, king of Assyria Pekah slain by Hoshea	759 740	
Isa. vii.	Invasion of Rezin and Pekah..... Isaiah's prophecy Ahaz delivered, but continues to forsake God				Anarchy follows for nine years...		
	Devastation of Judah						
	120,000 men of Judah slain in one day, and 200,000 taken cap- tive by Pekah, king of Israel...	741					
	Alliance with Tiglath-pileser, who increases his distress	740					
	Sacrificed to the gods of Damas- cus "which smote him," and they prove his ruin						

Script. Reference.	KINGS OF JUDAH.	Begins to reign.	Length of reign.	Script. Reference.	KINGS OF ISRAEL.	Begins to reign.	Length of reign.
2 Kings xviii.—xx. 2 Chr. xxix. —xxxi. 2 Chron. xxix. 1—36. 2 Chron. xxx.	<i>Hezekiah</i> Distinguished for his trust in God, yet, when left to himself, falling into sin Re-opens the temple the first month of the first year of his reign; solemn passover kept...	727	29y.	2 Kgs. xvii.	<i>HOSHEA</i> Samaria taken—the remainder of the ten tribes carried into cap- tivity by Shalmanezzer, son of Tiglath-pileser..... This was the end of the kingdom of Israel, after having con- tinued a separate kingdom 254 years.	730	10y.
Isa. xxxvi. —xxxix.	Makes every effort to instruct the people in the law of God Sennacherib's first invasion..... Hezekiah's sickness..... The ambassadors from Babylon... Sennacherib besieges Jerusalem... The Assyrian army destroyed..... Micah, Isaiah, and Nahum pro- phesy in his reign	713 713 712 710				731	
2 Kings xxi. 1—9. 2 Chron. xxxiii. 1—9. 2 Chron. xxxiii.	<i>Manasseh</i> Revives all the abominations which his father Hezekiah de- stroyed, making his people do worse than the heathen, whom the Lord had destroyed before the children of Israel Fills Jerusalem with blood of the innocent, yet, on repenting, finding mercy—a monument of God's grace sanctifying affliction	698	55				
2 Kings xxi. 2 Chron. xxxiii.	<i>Amon</i> Short and wicked reign—for- sakes the Lord—is slain by his own servants—imitates his father's sins but not his re- pentance, perhaps presuming to delay from the grace shown to Manasseh	676 643	2				
2 Kings xxii. 2 Chron. xxxiv.	<i>Joshiah</i> Early piety—great zeal in the re- formation of religion—solemn passover kept Zephaniah and Jeremiah begin to prophesy	641 624	13				
2 Kings xxiii. 2 Chron. xxxvi.	<i>Jehoahaz</i> , or <i>Shallum</i> , son of Josiah Relapses into the idolatries of his forefathers Amon and Manasseh, deposed by Pharaoh Necho, who carries him cap- tive into Egypt, where he dies, as foretold by Jeremiah.....	610	3 m.				
Jer. xxvii. 10—12. Jer. xxv. xxvi. — xxix. Dan. i. Jer. xxii. 18, 19. — xxxvi. 1—30. Jer. xxii. 24—30. Ezek. i. 2. Esther ii. 6.	<i>Jehoiakim</i> , brother of Shallum Not reformed by adversity, mur- ders the prophet Urijah, and attempts to murder Jeremiah. Carried captive to Babylon, and Daniel with him His miserable death, as foretold by Jeremiah Habakkuk prophesies.....	610 606 599	11y.				
2 Kings xxiv. — xxv. Jer. lii.	<i>Jehoiakim</i> , son of Jehoiakim..... Carried captive to Babylon, and with him Ezekiel and Mor- decai	588	3 m.				
	<i>Zedekiah</i> , son of Josiah Also carried captive	599	11y.				
	Obadiah and Ezekiel prophesy	588					
					The temple destroyed, and Ju- dah carried captive to Babylon 468 years after David began to reign over it; 388 years after the falling off of the ten tribes, and 134 years after the destruc- tion of the kingdom of Israel. As with individuals so with nations, iniquity is their ruin. Ps. ix. 17.		

N.B. Those names in Capitals are the heads of separate families.

The remarks already made on the chronological difficulties of Scripture must be borne in mind on referring to this Table.

As an illustration of the value of this Table may be noticed the state of Israel during pious Asa's reign in Judah. Jeroboam was on the throne at the beginning of his reign and Ahab at the end of it; between whom were Nadab, Baasha, Elah, Zimri, Tiani, and Omri, undermining and destroying one another, showing that "for the transgression of a land many are the princes thereof" (Prov. xxviii. 2), and that as they increased in idolatry, they increased in misery.

§ ix. *On the Book of EZRA.*

Ezra was a priest, and is generally supposed to have revised all the books of which the Holy Scriptures then consisted, disposing them in their proper order, and settling the canon of Scripture for his time^a. He was a man of deep humility^b, and fervent zeal for God's honour^c; anxious to commend his service to others^d; deeply grieving over those who were departing from it^e; and sparing no pains to bring them to repentance^f.

This book gives the history of about eighty years, being a continuation of Jewish history from the time at which the Chronicles conclude; for it begins with a repetition of the two verses with which the Second Book of Chronicles ends. It consists of three parts.

I. It relates the return of the Jews from their captivity in Babylon under the charge of Zerubbabel, the grandson of Jehoiakin king of Judah, particularly informing us upon what encouragement, and in what numbers they returned, ch. i. ii.

II. It gives an account of the rebuilding and dedication of the temple, notwithstanding the repeated hindrances from the Samaritans, ch. iii.—vi.

III. It relates the journey of Ezra to Jerusalem as a deputy of Artaxerxes, and, on his arrival, his deep mourning over, and dissolution of, the marriages of the Jews with heathen women, ch. vii.—x. The great effects following upon his earnest intercession on this account are a strong encouragement to us to pray for each other, ch. ix. 5; x. 1.

This book records the fulfilment of the prophecies of Isaiah (xliv. 28), and Jeremiah (xxv. 12; xxix. 10), one of whom had predicted the name of their deliverer, the other the exact time of their deliverance. It is important also to remark, that God foretold by his prophet Jeremiah, not only the time of the return of the Jews, but also the penitent state of heart which should be the cause of it. Jer. xxix. 12—14; xxxi. 8, 9. 18—20, &c.

^a See Poole.

^b Ezra ix. 10—15.

^c Ezra vii. 10; viii. 21—23.

^d Neh. viii. 2—8.

^e Ezra ix. 3; x. 6.

^f Ezra x. 10, &c.

The gracious commission of Artaxerxes^g is also a wonderful illustration of God's power over men's hearts, and of his care of his Church; Artaxerxes' decree being much more advantageous to the Jews than even that of Cyrus. It is very remarkable how every opposition they met with wrought for their good in the end^h.

The book of Ezra should be read with the prophecies of Haggai and Zechariah. Compare Ezra v. 2, with Hag. i. 12, and Zech. iii. iv. These prophets were raised up particularly to encourage the people in the arduous work of building the temple, which was to be glorified by the presence of Christ. See Haggai ii. 7. 9. Zech. ii. 10; iii. 8—10.

In observing the preparation made for the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ in the events of this book, we may not only remark the rebuilding of the temple, which was a type of his Church, but may also observe, that an ancestor of the promised Messiahⁱ (Sheshbazzar or Zerubbabel) was appointed in the providence of God to lead his people from Babylon; and that their first care on their return was to renew their daily sacrifice^k, that rite in their dispensation which in so especial a manner pointed to the sacrifice of Christ.

The return of the Jews from Babylon is described by the prophets as a most glorious display of the providence of God^l; and, like the deliverance of the Israelites from Egypt, is typical of the deliverance of sinners from spiritual bondage, and of their pilgrimage to the heavenly Canaan under the care of God their Saviour. Isa. xxxii. 2; xlii. 16; xlix. 10; li. 11.

§ x. *On the Book of NEHEMIAH.*

It appears that though the temple had been rebuilt under the administration of Ezra, the walls and gates of the city were yet in the state of ruin in which the Chaldeans had left them, and that consequently the inhabitants lay open to the insult of every enemy who chose to attack them: Nehemiah, the writer of this book, was the instrument raised up for their protection. Though a Jew and a captive, he was, through the over-ruling providence of God,

^g Ezra vii. 11—26.

^k Ezra iii. 2.

^h Ezra v. vi.

^l Isa. xliii. 19; liv. 17.

ⁱ Matt. i. 12. Ezra i. 8; iii. 8.

selected for the office of cup-bearer to Artaxerxes, the king of Persia; one of the most lucrative and confidential situations in that court. Though thus in the midst of abundance and honour, yet, when he heard of the distressed state of his city, Jerusalem, he was deeply afflicted by it^m. He made it the subject of solemn prayerⁿ; and after four months an opportunity was given him of petitioning the king for leave to go to Jerusalem. The spirit of prayer, in which he made this petition, is very observable^o. The king, probably influenced by Esther his queen, appointed Nehemiah governor of Jerusalem, with a commission to rebuild the walls, and provide for the welfare of his people. Nehemiah executed his commission for twelve years with great success, amidst much opposition^p, consecrating both his labour and wealth to the object^q. After this he returned to Artaxerxes at Shushan; but at length went back to Jerusalem, and employed various measures to promote the further reformation of the Jews, particularly in the correction of those abuses which had crept in during his absence. This book may be thus divided:—

Chap. i. and ii. 1—11, contains the account of Nehemiah's departure from Shushan, and arrival at Jerusalem; chap. ii. 12—20; iii.—vi. 15, the building of the walls; chap. vii.—xii., the first reformation accomplished by Nehemiah; chap. xiii., the second reformation accomplished by Nehemiah on his return to Jerusalem.

Nehemiah presents to us a noble example of true patriotism; the fear of God^r being the principle from which it flows, and the making religion the foundation of our country's welfare the good at which it chiefly aims. In this view it may be remarked how anxious he was to promote among his people the due observance of the Sabbath; the neglect of which had brought upon them the wrath of God^s. In his devout acknowledgment of God in every thing^t (deriving the chief motives to perseverance from a consideration of his attributes^u); in his union of watchfulness with prayer, of diligence with dependence^x; and in

^m Neh. i. 3, 4.

ⁿ Neh. i. 5—11.

^o Neh. ii. 4.

^p Neh. iv. 23.

^q Neh. v. 14.

^r Neh. v. 15.

^s Neh. xiii. 18.

^t Neh. i. 11; ii. 18.

^u Neh. iv. 14.

^x Neh. iv. 9. 20.

his humility in tracing all good in himself to the grace of God^y, we may also imitate him. Sanballat and others ridiculed and persecuted him, and attempted to draw him into sin^z: yet still he was successful, and his success should be our encouragement, assuring us of the blessedness of the man that trusteth in God.

This book takes up the history of the Jews about twelve years after the close of the book of Ezra. In the 9th chap., which contains a confession of the sins of the Jews, a valuable epitome of their history is given, in the light in which it is ever of such importance to view it, viz. as a moral history, *i. e.* a selection of facts to illustrate principles, to teach us what God is, and what we are. It gives exalted views of the majesty^a, justice^b, and mercy of God^c, suggesting the influence such views ought to have on us. It presents awful views of the depravity of human nature^d, and of the evil of sin, and thus shows man's need of redemption. In the allusion to the Spirit^e, is also seen the germ of that doctrine which is unfolded in the Gospel.

The administration of Nehemiah lasted about thirty-six years; and with this book closes the history of the Old Testament.

§ xi. *On the Book of ESTHER.*

The events recorded in this book may be classed under the three following heads:—

I. The *evil anticipated* by the providence of God, in the promotion of Esther, a poor Jewish orphan, to the throne of Persia, and in the great service rendered to the king by her relation Mordecai, in detecting a plot against his life, ch. i. ii.

II. The *evil threatened*, in the advancement of Haman, and his design of utterly extirpating the whole Jewish nation, ch. iii.

III. The *evil defeated*, and over-ruled to the greater good of the Jews, and even of the heathens, ch. iv.—x.

The power of the Persians being at that time paramount in Asia, if the design of Haman had succeeded, the Jews, not only in Persia, but throughout the world, would have been annihilated^f, and with them the whole visible Church

^y Neh. ii. 12; vii. 5.

^z Neh. ii. 19; vi. 6—12.

^a Neh. ix. 6—32.

^b Neh. ix. 33.

^c Neh. ix. 17.

^d Neh. ix. 16. 26. 28.

^e Neh. ix. 20. 30.

^f Esther iii. 13, &c.; viii. 9.

of God. In observing the means by which this evil was defeated, Ahasuerus' sleepless night^g appears a very important link in the chain, and illustrates how the providence of God makes use of the most trifling, and what to us might seem the most accidental circumstances, to accomplish his will^h. The time also when it was defeated is no less remarkable. Haman's plot was confounded when he had procured the royal decree, when he had fixed a time, when he had issued forth letters to destroy the people of God, and when they were on the brink of ruin, and *he* in the height of confidence.

The Feast of Purim, instituted in commemoration of this deliverance of the Jews, is still kept annually by them, in their month Adar, which corresponds with part of our February and March.

In reference to the confidence with which Mordecai anticipated deliveranceⁱ, Bishop Hall has the following important remark:—"He saw the day of their common destruction enacted; he knew the Persian decrees to be unalterable, but withal he knew there was a Messiah to come. He was so well acquainted with God's covenant assurances to his Church, that he can, through the midst of those bloody resolutions, foresee indemnity to Israel; rather trusting the promises of God than the threats of man. This is the victory that overcomes all the fears and fury of the world, even our faith." See 1 John v. 4, 5.

As the events recorded in the Book of Esther happened before some of those recorded in Ezra and Nehemiah, the following dates may be of use:—

	Date		Date
Cyrus proclaims liberty to the Jews (Ezra i. 2)	536	Darius Hystaspes) (Ezra v. vi.)	519
Foundation of the Temple laid (Ezra iii. 8—13)	535	Esther made queen (Esther i. ii.)	518
Samaritans hinder the building of it (Ezra iv. 5)	534	The Temple finished (Ezra vi.)	515
Artaxerxes (called in profane history Cambyses) forbids it (Ezra iv. 17—24)	529	Haman plots the destruction of the Jews (Esther iii. iv.)	510
Haggai and Zechariah urge them to proceed (Ezra v. 1)	520	Ezra sent to govern Judea (Ezra vii.)	467
The Samaritans again interfere, but are restrained by a decree of Ahasuerus (or		Nehemiah sent (Neh. ii.) ..	445
		Malachi, the last of the prophets, contemporary with Nehemiah	415

^g Esther vi. 1.^h Rom. viii. 28.ⁱ Esther iv. 14.

Questions adapted to any Chapter of the Historical Parts of the Old Testament.

After having read a chapter in the historical parts of the Old Testament, the following questions may be asked, as an assistance to draw out the improvement to be derived from it.

1. What persons are mentioned in this chapter?
2. What facts?
3. What places?
4. Point out the places in the map.
5. Are these persons, facts, places, mentioned in any other parts of the Bible?
6. Is there an account in this chapter of any duty performed?
7. Does it appear to have been performed in a right or a wrong spirit?
8. Is there any thing in this chapter which shows you the value of God's blessing, or the means by which you may obtain or lose it?
9. Is there an account of any sin committed?
10. Can you trace what led to the commission of that sin^k?
11. Can you trace by what consequences, either to themselves or to others, it was followed^l?
12. Were they such consequences, as they, who committed the sin, had previously expected^m?
13. How does God speak of that sin in other parts of the Bible?
14. Can you compare what the persons did in this chapter, with the conduct of any others mentioned in Scripture?
15. Does God give in this chapter any example, any command, promise, threatening, &c., which you can apply to yourself?
16. What may you learn of the attributes of God from this chapter?
17. Is there any prophecy given or fulfilled in this chapter?
18. Is there any thing which reminds you of the Lord Jesus Christ; any type, or any thing which shows man's need of Him as a Saviour?
19. Is there any thing which shows man's need of the Holy Spirit?
20. Is there any proverb of Scripture illustrated by any of the events recorded in this chapter?

^k Thus Saul at one time greatly loved David (1 Sam. xvi. 21): observe what first excited his jealousy. (1 Sam. xviii. 8.)

Indolence prepared the way for David's grievous fall (2 Sam. xi. 1); and probably pride led him to number the people. (1 Chron. xxi. 1.) Evil counsellors led to the apostasy of Joash. (2 Chron. xxiv. 17.)

^l Thus the sin of Dathan and Abiram (Numb. xvi. 27. 32), and of Achan (Joshua vii. 24), involved the destruction of their families as well as of themselves.

Hiel was punished in the death of his children, while probably he was suffered to live. (1 Kings xvi. 34.)

^m Thus when Gideon made the ephod, he little thought of the snare it would become (Judges viii. 27); when Saul forced himself to offer a burnt offering, he little thought it would cost him his throne (1 Sam. xiii. 12. 14): David little thought the assistance he obtained through deceit from Ahimelech would be the occasion of the destruction of a city of the priests. (1 Sam. xxi. 2; xxii. 19.)

21. Are you reminded in reading this chapter of any part of the prayers, or other formularies, of the Church of England?

For further hints, refer to Archbishop Secker's Advice, p. 47.

Questions which may be used after having read through any of the Historical Books of the Old Testament, or parts of such books which include several chapters.

I. General Questions.

1. Why is this book called ———?
2. Over how long a period does the history contained in this book (or part of the book) extend?
3. How long was this before the birth of our Saviour?
4. What is the number of chapters in this book?
5. What are the principal subjects?
6. Can you arrange the chapters under these subjects?
7. Are there any references made to these subjects in any other parts of the Bible.
8. Have we any notice of these subjects in the Book of Psalms?
9. In what places did the principal events mentioned in this book happen?
10. Are any other remarkable events recorded in the Bible said to have happened in those places?
11. Are any other nations than that of the Israelites mentioned in this book? Give some account of them.
12. What are the names of the persons whose history is most prominent in this book?
13. Mention some of the most remarkable circumstances in the lives of those persons.
14. What are the excellences or defects of their characterⁿ?
15. Is any reference made to these persons in other parts of Scripture?
16. Do such references throw any additional light on their character?
17. Is there any person in Scripture of whom you are reminded as having acted like them, or who, under the same circumstances, acted very differently from them?
18. Does it contain any instance illustrating the influence of example, i. e. of one person's conduct inducing others to act like him^o?
19. Is there any reference to natural history, as animals, trees, plants, &c.? (See page 123.)
20. Is there any reference to manners and customs, &c., peculiar to Eastern nations, their houses, dress, &c.? (See page 136, &c.)
21. Are any and what miracles recorded in this book?

ⁿ Sometimes our particular attention is drawn to this. Thus of Hananiah (Neh. vii. 2) it is said he was a faithful man, and feared God above many. See also 2 Kings xviii. 5, as to Hezekiah; 2 Chron. xxiv. 7, as to Athaliah; and 1 Kings xviii. 3, as to Obadiah.

^o Thus Hezekiah's confidence in God inspired a like confidence in his people. (2 Chron. xxxii. 7, 8.) The example of Jeroboam, the first king of the ten tribes of Israel, was followed by every succeeding king. They all trod in the steps of the idolatry he established. Lot's sons-in-law were not influenced by his example, but remained in Sodom. (Gen. xix. 14.)

22. What prophecies are given or fulfilled respecting either persons or nations? If gradually fulfilled, trace the various steps of the fulfilment P.

23. Did any, and what prophets, whose writings form part of the Bible, live during this period?

24. Do their writings throw any light on the history here recorded, particularly on the moral conduct of the Jews, their sins, &c.?

II. *Questions on the Attributes of God.*

What illustrations does this book (or part of a book) give of (1) the power of God? (2) God's knowledge and notice of what men do and think? (3) the justice of God in punishing sin? (4) his long-suffering in delaying to punish the wicked? (5) his mercy in forgiving? (6) his grace in helping? (7) his readiness to hear prayer? (8) his providence, particularly in his direction of what seemed to be chance, his control over men's minds, wills, passions, counsels, actions, &c., and in overruling evil for good? (9) his faithfulness in fulfilling his promises? &c. &c. (10) and what effect ought these several views of God to have on your feelings and character? What practical use should you make of these attributes as motives to duty? (See page 198.)

III. *Questions on the Character and Condition of Man.*

1. With the views given above of the perfections of God, contrast the character of man; any instances which occur in this book of men's (1) weakness, (2) ignorance of the future, (3) injustice, (4) impatience, (5) cruelty, (6) inconstancy, &c. (7) What effect ought these several views of the character of man to have on you in your intercourse with your fellow-creatures?

2. Are there any instances in this book of those who resisted temptation?

3. Are there any instances of the blessings attending obedience to God?

4. Are there any instances of those who yielded to temptation?

5. What was the nature of the temptation by which they were overcome? (See page 199.) Was it the praise or the fear of men, the example of others, &c.?

6. What illustrations do you here find of the folly and deceit of sin?

7. From passages in this book, show the progress of sin. (See p. 200.)

8. Show also the evil of sin. (See p. 200.)

P Thus the prediction against Eli (1 Sam. ii. 31—34) began to be fulfilled when Hophni and Phinehas were killed (1 Sam. iv.); then again by the massacre of his descendants by Saul (1 Sam. xxii.); and eighty years after the threatenings, by the deposition of Abiathar from the priesthood. (1 Kings ii. 27.)

q See 1 Chron. xxviii. 9; Job xlii. 2—6; Neh. iv. 14; Psalm cxxx. 4; 2 Cor. xii. 9, in some measure illustrating this.

r Isaiah ii. 22; xli. 10—12; li. 12, 13; xxxi. 1—3. Gal. vi. 1.

s For instance, the men of Ashdod acknowledge and smart under the power of God, and yet cling to the worship of Dagon (1 Sam. v. 2—7); and Amaziah worships the very gods whom Jehovah enabled him to overcome. (2 Chron. xxv. 14.)

9. Of what particular virtues is there any illustration, any instance of repentance, faith, &c., returning good for evil, &c. ^t?

10. Is there any illustration of counterfeit virtues? of conduct that seemed right, but did not proceed from right motives? of false repentance, zeal, &c.? Are any persons mentioned who, either in what they said or did, seemed to be influenced by right feeling, but afterwards turned aside ^u?

11. Of what particular sins is there any illustration, as idolatry, unbelief, neglect of warnings, abuse of God's blessings, &c., lying, covetousness, envy, pride, impatience of reproof, &c.?

12. Are there any instances of good children, good parents, servants, masters, husbands, wives; good kings, magistrates, &c.; or the contrary?

13. What instances are given of those in affliction?

14. What were its effects upon them? Did it lead them to pray? Did it lead them to alter their conduct, &c.?

15. Give some illustration of the nature of human life; that is, of the disappointments, the fears, the sudden changes to which men are liable ^v.

16. Is there any illustration in this book of the vanity of the world, the insufficiency of things which men most esteem to make them happy, as riches, power, &c.?

IV. *Questions in reference to the Preparation made for the Coming of our Lord Jesus Christ.*

1. What types are given in this book concerning our Saviour, either in persons or things?

2. Can you show from the New Testament in what the resemblance consisted?

3. What prophecies are there in this book respecting the Saviour? Is there any allusion to these prophecies in the New Testament?

4. What general proofs are afforded by the events of this book of man's need of a Saviour, or of the holiness of God in his abhorrence of sin?

5. What proof does this book afford of man's need of the Holy Spirit to expose to him his sin, and to enable him to overcome it? (These proofs may be shown by instances of men's tendency to sin, the self-deceit accompanying it, the vain excuses made for the commission of it, &c.)

6. Do you, from any thing recorded in this book, learn how and for what you ought to pray?

^t See Rom. xii. 9—21; 1 Cor. xiii.; and Gal. v. 22, &c., noticing the examples from Scripture which illustrate any of the fruits of the Spirit referred to in these passages.

^u 1 Kings xviii. 39; 2 Chron. xi. 17; xii. 1; Deut. v. 28, 29.

^v See, for instance, Jephthah's disappointment, and at such a moment, in the loss of his only child (Judges xi. 34, 35); Naaman's leprosy (2 Kings v. 1); Jeroboam's bereavement (1 Kings xiv. 12—17); Benhadad (1 Kings xx. 3. 31); the Shunammite (2 Kings iv. 20); Nebuchadnezzar's insanity (Dan. iv. 30, 31); and his grandson's destruction on the very night of his festivity. (Dan. v. 9. 30.)

CHAPTER III.

THE POETICAL BOOKS.

CONTENTS.—§ i. *On the Book of Job.* § ii. *On the Book of Psalms.*
 § iii. *On the Book of Proverbs.* § iv. *On the Book of Ecclesiastes.*
 § v. *On the Song of Solomon.*

THESE Books, which are five in number—namely, Job, Psalms, Proverbs, Ecclesiastes, and the Canticles or Song of Solomon, are so called, because they are almost wholly composed in Hebrew verse.

§ i. *On the Book of Job.*

That Job was a real character, is proved by the manner in which he is spoken of by Ezekiel and St. James^w. He was an inhabitant of Uz, in that part of Arabia bordering on Judea; and has been supposed to be descended from Uz, the elder son of Nahor, Abraham's brother.

Elihu, in reckoning up the modes of Divine revelation, takes no notice of the delivery of the Mosaic Law; nor does there seem any allusion to the Jewish history in any part of the book. Hence Job is supposed to have lived before Moses, and this book to be the oldest in the world.

It may be divided into three parts.

I. A NARRATIVE of an eminent servant of God suddenly plunged from the greatest prosperity into deep affliction—the entire loss of property, children, health—which he bears with the most exemplary patience, ch. i. ii. 1—10.

II. A CONTROVERSY, which was a source of yet heavier trial to Job, and which originated in the visit of his three friends Eliphaz, Bildad, and Zophar. He was tempted to complain to them of his situation; but they, having taken up the erroneous notion that deep affliction was a certain proof of the great wickedness of him who suffered it, instead of comforting Job, charged him with hypocrisy, as guilty of

^w Ezek. xiv. 14; James v. 11.

some hidden wickedness^x. In the vehemence with which Job asserts his integrity, he reflects not only on the injustice of his friends, but in some measure on the inequality of the providence of God; as though the tenor of his past life entitled him to other treatment than that which he received at God's hands. But his appearing thus to account himself righteous in his own eyes^y kindled the wrath of a fourth friend, who had hitherto been silent. While condemning the unjust insinuations of Job's three friends, because they had found no answer, *i. e.* no convincing reply, and yet had condemned Job as a hypocrite and ungodly man^z, Elihu also sharply reproves Job for "justifying himself, rather than God^a." After which the Lord Himself answers Job out of the whirlwind; not condescending to enter into any particular explanation of his conduct: but from a consideration of his infinite and unsearchable greatness as seen even in creation^b, convincing Job of his presumption, his ignorance and guilt, in arraiging his providence: ch. ii. 11—xli.

III. THE ISSUE OF THE NARRATIVE AND OF THE CONTROVERSY seen in the deep repentance of Job; God's reproof of Job's three friends; his appointing them to offer sacrifice, which, through the intercession of Job, removed from them God's anger; and his promoting Job to yet greater prosperity than he had before his affliction, ch. xlii.

This book is interesting as containing the earliest record of Patriarchal religion, as it was professed by one probably not of the promised seed.

This book also remarkably displays the providence of God, and the plan of his moral government, and illustrates with unrivalled magnificence the glory of the Divine attributes: see particularly, when the Almighty addresses Job. It forcibly alludes to the doctrine of human depravity^c, speaks of sacrifice as the divinely appointed means of removing God's anger^d, and shows the benefit of intercessory prayer^e.

In ch. xix. 25—29, Job is generally understood to have spoken of a future resurrection and judgment to come.

^x Job iv. 7—9; viii. 13; xviii. 21;

xxii. 5.

^y Job xxxii. 1, 2.

^z Job xxxii. 3.

^a Job xxxiii. 8, 9; xxxiv. 5. 9. 35.

^b Job xxxviii.—xlii.

^c Job xiv. 4; xv. 14—16.

^d Job i. 5; xlii. 8.

^e Job xlii. 8—10.

Under this view of the passage, his faith in a promised Redeemer is especially to be noticed : as showing the harmony of character in the servants of God in every age. Job, Abraham^f, Moses^g, David^h, the Prophetsⁱ, derived their chief happiness from the same source as those who are born under the Christian dispensation. See Art. VII. of the Church of England.

1. Let the young imitate Elihu's humility^k. Though competent to speak best, he spoke last.

2. How much of heavenly wisdom is necessary to conduct controversy properly, when even Job failed in it!

3. It well becomes us to confess ourselves to be miserable offenders, when even Job abhorred himself, and said, "Behold, I am vile^l." He who knows himself best, esteems himself least.

§ ii. *On the Book of PSALMS.*

This is a collection of sacred hymns, most of which were composed by David, who is hence called the sweet Psalmist of Israel. 2 Sam. xxiii. 1.

Bishop Horne describes the Book of Psalms as an epitome of the Bible, adapted to the purposes of devotion ; and in the language of this Divine Book, the prayers of the Church have been offered up to the throne of grace from age to age. The Fathers assure us that in the earlier times, the whole Book of Psalms was generally learnt by heart ; that Psalmody was every where used at meat, and in business ; that it enlivened the social hours, and softened the fatigues of life.

Hooker says, "what is there necessary for man to know, which the Psalms are not able to teach ? Let there be any grief or disease incident unto the soul of man, any wound or sickness named, for which there is not in this treasure-house a present comfortable remedy at all times to be found."

In illustration of these remarks, it may be noticed that some of the Psalms are expressions of praise and adoration, which display the majesty, power, goodness, and other attributes of God, as Psalms civ. cxxxix. : others are songs of thanksgiving, blessing God for mercies bestowed, as Psalm

^f John viii. 56.

^g Heb. xi. 26.

^h 2 Sam. xxiii. 5.

ⁱ 1 Pet. i. 10.

^k Job xxxii. 4—6.

^l Job xlii. 6 ; xl. 4.

ciii.: others are prayers in which are implored the mercy of God, the pardon of sin, as Psalm li.; deliverance from danger, as Psalm xvii.; deliverance from affliction, as Psalm cxxiii.: while in others intercession is made—for the Church, as Psalm cxxii.—for the heathen, as Psalm lxvii. Some of the Psalms are historical, as Psalm lxxviii., composed with a view to preserve the remembrance of the most considerable events which befel the Jewish nation; while others describe the excellency of God's law, as Psalm xix. and cxix.; the character of good and bad men, as Psalm i.; the vanity of human life, as Psalm xc. Lastly, some of them are prophetic, presenting us with predictions relating to the Lord Jesus Christ and the times of the Gospel; finely illustrating the "connexion which subsisted between the two covenants, and shedding an evangelical light on the Mosaic dispensation by unveiling its inward radiance." Thus,—

Psalm xl. 6, speaks of our Lord's coming in our nature to abolish the Mosaic dispensation, of which "sacrifice and offering" was the distinguishing feature (see Heb. x. 5).

Psalm cxxxii. 11, predicts that the Messiah should be of the family of David (see Acts ii. 30).

Ps. xlv. 6, 7, declares his Divine nature (see Heb. i. 8).

Psalm cxviii. 22, quoted six different times in the New Testament, foretels the rejection of Him by the Jews;

Psalm xxii. his suffering on the cross;

Psalm xvi. 9—11, his resurrection (see Acts ii. 27);

Psalm lxviii. 18, his ascension, and sending the Holy Spirit (see Eph. iv. 8);

Psalms lxix. and cix., the sore judgment which should befel Judas and the Jewish nation (see Rom. xi. 9, 10, and Acts i. 20);

Psalm cxvii., the call of the Gentiles (see Rom. xv. 11); and Psalm lxxii., the final triumph and universal establishment of Messiah's kingdom throughout the earth.

Of the Prophetic Psalms, the most remarkable, as applying throughout and exclusively to Christ, is Psalm cx.

Nearly fifty of the Psalms are quoted in the New Testament, which shows how frequently our Lord made use of that book to instruct his disciples that He was the Christ. See Luke xxiv. 44.

What is historical, as it relates to David and the Jewish Church, is often typical, and so prophetic, as it relates to

Jesus Christ, and to his Church either militant or triumphant^m. While David is describing his own enemies, sufferings, and triumphs, the Spirit enlarges his sentiments, and swells out his expressions to a proportion adapted to the character of the Messiah, of whom David was so eminent a type, that our Saviour is often expressly described in Scripture by his nameⁿ.

Forgiveness and mercy towards the persons of his own enemies were distinguishing parts of David's character; of which we see very beautiful proofs in 1 Sam. xxiv. 4—10; xxvi. 7—13; 2 Sam. i. 17—27; iv. 8—12; xix. 16—23. But in some of the Psalms, David utters bitter curses against his enemies. The most remarkable in this respect are Ps. lxix. and cix.; but these, as is seen above, Peter applies as prophecies fulfilled in the punishment of Judas and of the Jews. This teaches us that we are to understand the curses contained in the Psalms, as threatenings uttered, or judgments foretold, by a Prophet of God, against hardened and finally impenitent sinners; and that the feeling with which we should repeat them should be an awful sense of God's holiness and justice in the punishment of sin.

^m In reference to this subject, Bishop Horne has the following remark: "Upon this principle it is easily seen that the objections which may seem to lie against the use of Jewish services in Christian congregations, cease at once. Thus, it may be said, Are we concerned with the affairs of David and of Israel? Have we any thing to do with the ark and the temple? They are no more. Are we to go up to Jerusalem, and to worship on Zion? They are desolated and trodden under foot by the Turks. Are we to sacrifice young bullocks according to the law? The law is to be abolished never to be observed again. Do we pray for victory over Moab, Edom, Philistia, or for deliverance from Babylon? There are no such nations, no such places in the world. —What then do we mean, when, taking such expressions in our mouths, we utter them in our own persons as parts of our devotions before God? Assuredly we must mean, a spiritual Jerusalem and Zion; a spiritual ark and temple; a spiritual law; spiritual sacrifices, and spiritual victories over spiritual enemies, all described under the old names, which are still retained, though old things are passed away and all things are become new. By substituting Messiah for David, the Gospel for the law, the Church Christian for that of Israel, and the enemies of one for those of the other, the Psalms are made our own."—*Bishop Horne on Psalms, Preface.*

ⁿ Isa. lv. 3; Jer. xxx. 9; Ezek. xxxiv. 23; Hosea iii. 5.

The following TABLE, showing the probable occasion when each Psalm was composed, is abridged from TOWNSEND'S HARMONY OF THE OLD TESTAMENT.

Psalms.	After what Scripture.	Probable occasion on which each Psalm was composed.	B.C.
i.	Nehem. xiii. 3	Written by Ezra as a preface to the Book of Psalms	444
ii.	1 Chron. xvii. 27 ...	{ On the delivery of the promise by Nathan to David—a prophecy of Christ's kingdom ... }	1044
iii.	2 Sam. xv. 29	On David's flight from Absalom.....	1023
iv.	2 Sam. xvii. 29	During the flight from Absalom.....	
v.	2 Sam. xvii. 29	During the flight from Absalom.....	
vi.	1 Chron. xxviii. 21.	Inserted towards the end of David's life	1015
vii.	2 Sam. xvi. 14	On the reproaches of Shimei	1023
viii.	1 Chron. xxviii. 21.	Inserted towards the end of David's life	1015
ix.	1 Sam. xvii.	On the victory over Goliath.....	1063
x.	Dan. vii. 28	During the Babylonish captivity	539
xi.	1 Sam. xix. 3.....	When David was advised to flee to the mountains	1062
xii.	1 Chron. xxviii. 1.	Inserted towards the end of David's life	1015
xiii.	Dan. vii. 28	During the Babylonish captivity	539
xiv.			
xv.			
xvi.	1 Chron. xvii. 27 ...	On the delivery of the promise by Nathan to David.	1044
xvii.	1 Sam. xxii. 19.....	On the murder of the priests by Doeg	1060
xviii.	2 Sam. xxii. 51.....	On the conclusion of David's wars	1019
xix.	1 Chron. xxviii. 21.	Inserted towards the end of David's life	1015
xx.	2 Sam. x. 19.....	On the war with the Ammonites and Syrians	1036
xxi.			
xxii.			
xxiii.	1 Chron. xvii. 27 ...	On the delivery of the promise by Nathan	1044
xxiv.	1 Chron. xxviii. 21.	Inserted towards the end of David's life	1015
xxv.	Dan. vii. 28	During the Babylonish captivity	539
xxvi.			
xxvii.			
xxviii.	1 Chron. xxviii. 21.	Inserted towards the end of David's life	1015
xxix.			
xxx.			
xxxi.	1 Chron. xxi. 30 ...	On the dedication of the threshing-floor of Araunah	1017
xxxii.	1 Sam. xxiii. 12 ...	On David's persecution by Saul.....	1060
xxxiii.	2 Sam. xii. 15	On the pardon of David's adultery	1034
xxxiv.			
xxxv.			
xxxvi.	1 Sam. xxi. 15	On David's leaving the city of Gath	1060
xxxvii.	1 Sam. xxii. 19.....	On David's persecution by Doeg	1060
xxxviii.	Dan. vii. 28	During the Babylonish captivity	539
xxxix.			
xl.			
xli.	1 Chron. xxviii. 21.	Inserted towards the end of David's life	1015
xlii.			
xliiii.			
xliiv.	2 Sam. xvii. 29.....	On David's flight from Absalom.....	1023
xlv.	2 Kings xix. 7	On the blasphemous message of Rabshakeh	710
xlvi.	1 Chron. xvii. 27 ...	On the delivery of the promise by Nathan	1044
xlvii.	2 Chron. xx. 26 ...	On the victory of Jehoshaphat	896
xlviii.	2 Chron. vii. 10.....	On the removal of the ark into the temple	1004
xlix.	Ezra vi. 22.....	On the dedication of the second temple	515
l.	Dan. vii. 28	During the Babylonish captivity	539
li.			
lii.			
liii.	2 Sam. xii. 15	Confession of David after his adultery	1034
liiv.	1 Sam. xxii. 19.....	On David's persecution by Doeg	1060
liv.	Dan. vii. 28	During the Babylonish captivity.....	539
lv.	1 Sam. xxiii. 23 ...	On the treachery of the Zephims to David	1060
lv.	2 Sam. xvii. 29.....	During the flight from Absalom.....	1023

Psalms.	After what Scripture.	Probable occasion on which each Psalm was composed.	B.C.
lvi.	1 Sam. xxi. 15	When David was with the Philistines in Gath	1060
lvii.	1 Sam. xxiv. 22 ...	On David's refusal to kill Saul in the cave	1058
lviii.	1 Sam. xxiv. 22 ...	Continuation of Psalm lvii.	1058
lix.	1 Sam. xix. 17	On Saul surrounding the town of David	1061
lx.	1 Kings xi. 20	On the conquest of Edom by Joab.....	1040
lxi.	1 Chron. xxviii. 21.	Inserted towards the end of David's life	1015
lxii.	2 Sam. xvii. 29.....	On David's persecution by Absalom	1023
lxiii.	1 Sam. xxiv. 22 ...	Prayer of David in the wilderness of Engedi	1055
lxiv.	1 Sam. xxii. 19.....	On David's persecution by Saul.....	1060
lxv.	1 Chron. xxviii. 21.	Inserted towards the end of David's life	1015
lxvi.	Ezra iii. 13	On laying the foundation of the second temple ...	535
lxvii.	Dan. vii. 28	During the Babylonish captivity	539
lxviii.	2 Sam. vi. 11.....	On the first removal of the ark	1045
lxix.	1 Chron. xxviii. 21.	Inserted towards the end of David's life	1015
lxx.	2 Sam. xvii. 29.....	On Absalom's rebellion.....	1023
lxxi.			
lxxii.	1 Chron. xxix. 19.....	On Solomon being made king by his father.....	1015
lxxiii.	2 Kings xix. 19 ...	On the destruction of Sennacherib.....	710
lxxiv.	Jer. xxxix. 10	On the destruction of the city and temple	588
lxxv.	2 Kings xix. 35.....	On the destruction of Sennacherib.....	710
lxxvi.			
lxxvii.	Dan. vii. 28	During the Babylonish captivity.....	539
lxxviii.	1 Chron. xxviii. 21.	Inserted towards the end of David's life	1015
lxxix.	Jer. xxxix. 10	On the destruction of the city and temple	588
lxxx.	Dan. vii. 28	During the Babylonish captivity	539
lxxxi.	Ezra vi. 22.....	On the dedication of the second temple	515
lxxxii.	2 Chron. xix. 7.....	On the appointment of Judges by Jehoshaphat ...	897
lxxxiii.	Jer. xxxix. 10	On the desolation caused by the Assyrians.....	588
lxxxiv.	Ezra iii. 13	On the foundation of the second temple	535
lxxxv.	Ezra i. 4.....	On the decree of Cyrus	536
lxxxvi.	1 Chron. xxviii. 21.	Inserted towards the end of David's life	1015
lxxxvii.	Ezra iii. 7	On the return from the Babylonish captivity	536
lxxxviii.	Exod. ii. 25	During the affliction in Egypt.....	1531
lxxxix.	Dan. vii. 28	During the Babylonish captivity	539
xc.	Numb. xiv. 45	On the shortening of man's life, &c.	1489
xc.	1 Chron. xxviii. 10.	After the advice of David to Solomon	1015
xcii.	Dan. vii. 28	During the Babylonish captivity	539
xciii.			
xciv.	Jer. xxxix. 10	On the destruction of the city and temple	588
xcv.	1 Chron. xxviii. 21.	Inserted towards the end of David's life.....	1015
xcvi.	1 Chron. xvi. 43 ...	On the removal of the ark from Obed-edom's house	1051
xcvii.	2 Chron. vii. 10.....	On the removal of the ark into the temple	1004
xcviii.			
xcix.	2 Chron. vii. 10.....	On the removal of the ark into the temple	1004
c.			
ci.	1 Chron. xxviii. 21.	Inserted towards the end of David's life	1015
cii.	Dan. ix. 27	On the near termination of the captivity	538
ciii.	2 Sam. xii. 15	On the pardon of David's adultery.....	1034
civ.	1 Chron. xxviii. 21.	Inserted towards the end of David's life	1015
cv.	1 Chron. xvi. 43 ...	On the removal of the ark from Obed-edom's house	1051
cvi.			
cvii.	Ezra iii. 7	On the return from the captivity	536
cviii.	1 Kings xi. 20	On the conquest of Edom by Joab.....	1040
cix.	1 Sam. xxii. 19.....	On David's persecution by Doeg.....	1060
cx.	1 Chron. xvii. 27 ...	On the promise by Nathan to David.....	1044
cx.	Ezra iii. 7	On the return from the captivity	536
cxii.			
cxiii.	2 Chron. xx. 26.....	On the victory of Jehoshaphat.....	896
cxiv.			
cxv.	Ezra iii. 7	On the return from the captivity	536
cxvi.			
cxvii.	1 Chron. xvii. 27 ...	On the promise by Nathan to David.....	1044
cxviii.	Neh. xiii. 3	Manual of devotion by Ezra	444

Psalms.	After what Scripture.	Probable occasion on which each Psalm was composed.	B.C.
cxx... } cxxi..... } cxxii... }	1 Chron. xxviii. 21.	Inserted towards the end of David's life	1015
cxxiii.....	Dan. vii. 28.....	During the Babylonish captivity	539
cxxiv.....	1 Chron. xxviii. 21.	Inserted towards the end of David's life	1015
cxxv.....	Ezra iii. 7	On the return from the captivity	536
cxxvi.....	Ezra i. 4.....	On the decree of Cyrus	536
cxxvii... } cxxviii. }	Ezra iii. 7	On the return from the captivity	536
cxxix.....	Ezra iv. 24.....	On the opposition of the Samaritans	535
cxxx.....	Dan. vii. 28	During the Babylonish captivity	539
cxix.....	1 Chron. xxviii. 21.	Inserted towards the end of David's life	1015
cxli.....	2 Chron. xv. 14.....	On the second removal of the ark	1051
cxlii.....	1 Chron. xxviii. 21.	Inserted towards the end of David's life	1015
cxliii.....	Ezra iii. 7	On the return from the captivity	536
cxliv.....	2 Chron. vii. 10 ...	On the removal of the ark into the temple	1004
cxlv.....	Dan. vii. 28	During the Babylonish captivity	539
cxlv.....	Ezra vi. 13	On the rebuilding of the temple.....	519
cxlv.....	1 Chron. xiii. 4.....	Prayer of David when made king over all Israel	1048
cxli.....	1 Sam. xxii. 19.....	On David's persecution by Doeg.....	1060
cxli.....	1 Sam. xxvii. 1.....	Prayer of David when driven from Judæa	1055
cxli.....	1 Sam. xxii. 1	Prayer of David in the cave of Adullam	1060
cxliii.....	2 Sam. xvii. 29.....	During the war with Absalom.....	1023
cxliiv.....	2 Sam. xvii. 29.....	On the victory over Absalom	1023
cxlv.....	1 Chron. xxviii. 10.	David, when old, reviewing his past life	1015
cxlvi. to } cl..... }	Ezra vi. 22.....	On the dedication of the second temple	515

§ iii. *On the Book of PROVERBS.*

The general design of this book is to instruct the young at their entrance into public and active life:—that they may “know wisdom and instruction; perceive the words of understanding; receive the instruction of wisdom, justice, and judgment; to give subtlety to the simple, to the young man knowledge and discretion.” Ch. i. 2—4.

It is very important to observe, that Solomon, the writer of this book, lays down this rule as the foundation of all his instructions: “The fear of the Lord is the beginning of wisdom:” thus teaching us there can be no virtue in our intercourse with our fellow-creatures, where this is wanting as the motive of action.

We are not, says Bishop Hopkins, generally to expect any connexion, either of sense or sentences, in this book of Proverbs. Other parts of Scripture are like a rich mine, where the precious ore runs along in one continued vein;

but this is like a heap of pearls, which, though they are loose and unstrung, are not therefore the less excellent and valuable.

This book may however be thus divided into five parts.

Part I., containing the first nine chapters, is a sort of preface—the teacher giving his pupil a connected series of admonitions, cautions, and encouragements to the study of wisdom.

Part II., extending from chap. x. to xxii. 16, comprises what may be strictly called *Proverbs*—namely, unconnected maxims, expressed with much neatness and simplicity.

Part III. reaches from chap. xxii. 17 to xxiv. inclusive, in which the teacher renews his connected admonitions to the study of wisdom.

Part IV. contains proverbs supposed to have been selected from some larger collection of Solomon by the men of Hezekiah—that is, by the Prophets whom he employed to restore the Service and writings of the Jewish Church; as Eliakim, and Joah, and Shebna, and probably Hosea, and Micah, and even Isaiah. This part, like the second, consists of unconnected sentences, and extends from chap. xxv. to xxix.

Part V. consists of the last two chapters; the first of which contains the wise observations and instructions delivered by Agur to his pupils Ithiel and Ucal; and the other the excellent lessons addressed to king Lemuel by his mother.

With regard to the interpretation of the Proverbs, it is important to remark, that some of them, though expressed without limitation, are yet not to be understood as universally true. Thus,—

Prov. x. 15. “The destruction of the poor is their poverty;” inasmuch as it exposes them to injuries and abuses. But sometimes poverty is a protection, as appears in the tremendous judgment inflicted on the Jews by Nebuchadnezzar; where we are told, he burnt every great man’s house, taking all that had property captive, but leaving the poor of the land to be vinedressers, &c. 2 Kings xxv. 9. 12.

Prov. x. 27. “The fear of the Lord longeth days, but the years of the wicked shall be shortened.” It is true, as a general remark, that piety contributes both to the length and enjoyment of life; but Abel was murdered, and

the life of Cain prolonged. Abijah^o meets an early death, and his wicked father's life is prolonged to a reign of twenty-two years. Though Daniel was preserved^p, Nabuchodonosor^q both fell a victim to his obedience^q. Pious Jonathan^r and apostate Saul perished in the same battle; "the corn is cut down with the weeds, but to a better purpose." God inflicts judgments, in some instances, to show He governs the world at present; He withholds them in others, to show that He will judge it hereafter.

Prov. xi. 15. "He that hateth suretyship is sure" (see also xvii. 18). This is not a condemnation of suretyships under all circumstances, but a strong warning against undertaking them rashly.

Prov. xvi. 7. "When a man's ways please the Lord, he maketh even his enemies to be at peace with him."—Under the Old Testament dispensation, when temporal prosperity was promised as the reward of obedience, this was, as a general truth, remarkably illustrated in the history of the Israelites^s, more particularly in the cases of Solomon, Jehoshaphat, Asa, &c. Yet, though David's ways pleased the Lord, Saul was never at peace with him. Still more truly may this be said of Him, who was David's son and David's Lord. The Apostle also warns Timothy that all that will live godly in Christ Jesus shall suffer persecution^t. There is however something in the meekness and love of the Christian character which tends to conciliate; and God not unfrequently does cause them to produce this effect. Acts ii. 47.

Prov. xviii. 22. "Whoso findeth a wife, findeth a good thing, and obtaineth favour of the Lord."—Manoah found it so^u; but Ahab did not^v, nor Job^w, nor Jehoram^x.

Prov. xxii. 6. "Train up a child in the way he should go, and when he is old he will not depart from it." Pious principles instilled in youth *seldom* fail of operating in old age. Moses, Samuel, Timothy, &c., are instances of it. Yet wicked Ahaz, one of the most dreadful examples recorded in Scripture of sin and of its consequent punish-

^o 1 Kings xiv. 13—17.

^p Dan. vi. 23.

^q 1 Kings xxi. 3. 13.

Lev. xxv. 23.

^r 1 Sam. xxxi.

^s Exod. xxxiv. 24.

^t 2 Tim. iii. 12.

^u Judges xiii. 23.

^v 1 Kings xxi. 25.

^w Job ii. 9, 10.

^x 2 Kings viii. 18.

ment, was the son of a godly father, and the father of a godly son. Pious Hezekiah was the son of a wicked father, and the father of a wicked son. Jeroboam had a pious son, Abijah; and Samuel a Joel and Abiah, who turned out unjust judges, though we have no intimation, as in the case of Eli, that he had been too indulgent to them.

We shall find the reading of the Proverbs more profitable, if we illustrate the general truths contained in them by examples from the historical parts of the Old and New Testament*.

Prov. i. 7. "The fear of the Lord is the beginning of knowledge: but fools despise wisdom and instruction." (Rehoboam, 1 Kings xii. 13; Eli's sons, 1 Sam. ii. 25; Athenian philosophers, Acts xvii. 18.)

Prov. i. 10. "My son, if sinners entice thee, consent thou not." (Adam, Gen. iii. 6; Balaam, Numb. xxii.; Jehoshaphat, 1 Kings xxii. 4; Prophet of Judah, 1 Kings xiii. 15—19. 24; Micaiah's firmness, 1 Kings xxii. 13, 14.)

Prov. i. 32. "The prosperity of fools shall destroy them." (The Israelites, Deut. xxxii. 15—25; Hos. xiii. 6; Tyre, Ezek. xxviii. 2. 16, 17; Sodom, Ezek. xvi. 49.)

Prov. i. 33. "But whoso hearkeneth unto me shall dwell safely, and shall be quiet from fear of evil." (Noah, Gen. vi. 22; vii. 23; Heb. xi. 7; see also John x. 28.)

Prov. iii. 5, 6. "Trust in the Lord with all thine heart; and lean not unto thine own understanding. In all thy ways acknowledge him, and he shall direct thy paths." (Asa, 2 Chron. xiv. 9—15; Hezekiah, 2 Kings xix. 14, &c.; Abraham's servant, Gen. xxiv. 12—27; Neh. ii. 4; Ezra viii. 21—23; David, 1 Sam. xxx. 6—8.)

Prov. iii. 33. "The curse of the Lord is in the house of the wicked." (Jeroboam, 1 Kings xiii. 34; xv. 29, 30; Baasha, 1 Kings xvi. 1—4. 12, 13; Ahab, 1 Kings xxi. 17—22; Jehu, Hos. i. 4; Hazael, Amos i. 4; Esau, Obad. 18.) "But he blesseth the habitation of the just." (Abraham, Heb. xi. 12, contrasted with 2 Kings x. 1—8; Obad-edom, 2 Sam. vi. 11.)

Prov. iv. 14. "Enter not into the path of the wicked." (Lot, Gen. xiii. 10—13; David, 1 Sam. xxvii. 1.)

Prov. iv. 18, 19. "The path of the just is as the shining light." (The wise men, Matt. ii. 1—13; Nathanael, John i. 46—51; the Eunuch, Acts viii. 27—40; Cornelius, Acts x.; Paul, 2 Cor. iii. 18.) "The way of the wicked is as darkness; they know not at what they stumble." (Ahab, 1 Kings xviii. 17; the Jews, Ezek. xviii. 29; Jer. v. 19. 25. Also, their ignorance, that the cause of their present miseries is their rejection of the Messiah, Deut. xxviii. 29.)

Prov. v. 21. "For the ways of man are before the eyes of the Lord, and he pondereth all his goings." (Nathanael, John i. 48; Babel, Gen. xi. 4—7; Sodom and Gomorrah, Gen. xviii. 21.)

* The author has treated this subject more at large in a work entitled, "The Book of Proverbs explained and illustrated from Holy Scripture."

Prov. v. 22. "His own iniquities shall take the wicked himself." (Agag, 1 Sam. xv. 33; Adoni-bezek, Judges i. 7; Haman, Esther vii. 10; Judas, Matt. xxvii. 3—5.)

Prov. viii. 17. "I love them that love me; and those that seek me early shall find me." (Josiah, 2 Chron. xxxiv. 1—3; Samuel, 1 Sam. ii. 26.)

Prov. ix. 8. "Rebuke a wise man, and he will love thee." (David loved Nathan, see page 235; Peter loved our Lord, John xxi. 17; the two disciples constrained their reprover to abide with them, Luke xxiv. 25. 29.)

Prov. x. 1. "A foolish son is the heaviness of his mother." (Esau, Gen. xxvi. 34, 35; xxvii. 46.)

Prov. x. 2. "Treasures of wickedness profit nothing:" (Tyre, Ezek. xxvi. 15; xxvii. xxviii. The rich man, Luke xvi. 23.) "But righteousness delivereth from death." (Noah, Gen. vii. 1, with Heb. xi. 7; Dan. v. vi. Belshazzar contrasted with Daniel.)

Prov. x. 7. "The memory of the just is blessed:" (Elisha, 2 Kings xiii. 21; Jehoiada, 2 Chron. xxiv. 15, &c.; Dorcas, Acts ix. 36, &c.; Mary, Mark xiv. 9.) "But the name of the wicked shall rot." (Absalom, 2 Sam. xviii. 17; Jehoiakim, Jer. xxii. 18, 19; Jezebel, 2 Kings ix. 37; Jeroboam, son of Nebat, 2 Kings xiii. xiv. xv.)

Prov. x. 8. "The wise in heart will receive commandments:" (David, 2 Sam. vii.; the mother of our Lord, John ii. 4, 5; the nobleman, John iv. 50.) "But a prating fool shall fall." (Amaziah, 2 Kings xiv.)

Prov. x. 14. "Wise men lay up knowledge:" (Mary, Luke ii. 51.) "But the mouth of the foolish is near destruction." (Nabal, 1 Sam. xxv. 10—13; the Israelites, Numb. xiv. 27—39.)

Prov. x. 23. "It is as sport to a fool to do mischief." Prov. xiv. 9, "Fools make a mock at sin." (Abner, 2 Sam. ii. 14—17.)

Prov. x. 24. "The fear of the wicked, it shall come upon him:" (The Canaanites, Josh. v.; Belshazzar, Dan. v.; Ahab, 1 Kings xxii.; Haman, Esther vii. 7—10.) "But the desire of the righteous shall be granted." (Hannah, 1 Sam. i.; Esther iv. 16; viii. 15—17; Simeon, Luke ii. 29, 30; see also Ps. xxxvii. 4; John xvi. 23, 24.)

Prov. x. 25. "As the whirlwind passeth, so is the wicked no more:" (Elah, 1 Kings xvi. 9; Zimri, 1 Kings xvi. 18, 19.) "But the righteous is an everlasting foundation." (Abraham, Gen. xvii. 1—8; David, 2 Sam. vii. 16; see also Matt. vii. 24, 25.)

Prov. xi. 2. "When pride cometh, then cometh shame:" (Miriam, Numb. xii. 10; Uzziah, 2 Chron. xxvi. 16—21; Nebuchadnezzar, Dan. iv. 30, &c.) "But with the lowly is wisdom." (Daniel, Dan. ii. 30; Joseph, Gen. xli. 16.)

Prov. xi. 3. "The integrity of the upright shall guide them:" (Joseph, Gen. xxxix. xl. xli.) "But the perverseness of transgressors shall destroy them." (Saul, 1 Sam. xv.)

Prov. xi. 5, 6. "The righteousness of the perfect shall direct his way: but the wicked shall fall by his own wickedness. The righteousness of the upright shall deliver them: but transgressors shall be taken in their own naughtiness." (Haman, Esther vii. 10; viii. 7; Daniel's accusers, Dan. vi. 24, &c.; Ahithophel's death, 2 Sam. xvii. 23, contrasted with David's restoration to his throne.)

Prov. xi. 7. "When a wicked man dieth, his expectation shall perish." (Absalom, 2 Sam. xviii.; the rich fool, Luke xii. 16—20.)

Prov. xi. 10. "When it goeth well with the righteous, the city rejoiceth." (Mordecai, Esther viii. 16.) "When the wicked perish, there is shouting." (Sisera, Judges v.; Athaliah, 2 Kings xi. 13. 20; see Rev. xix. 1—3.)

Prov. xi. 21. "Though hand join in hand, the wicked shall not be unpunished:" (Tower of Babel, Gen. xi. 4, &c.; the kings who combined together, Josh. ix. 1, 2; Adoni-zedec, Josh. x.) "But the seed of the righteous shall be delivered." (Mephibosheth, 2 Sam. xxi. 7; Solomon, 1 Kings xi. 12. 34; Abijam, 1 Kings xv. 4; the Israelites often, Exod. iii. 15. 17; 2 Kings viii. 19.)

Prov. xi. 25. "The liberal soul shall be made fat; and he that watereth shall be watered also himself." (Abraham, Gen. xiii. 9. 14, 15; widow of Zarephath, 1 Kings xvii. 10, &c.; the Shunammite, 2 Kings iv.)

Prov. xii. 5. "The counsels of the wicked are deceit." (Geshem, Neh. vi. 2; Ishmael, Jerem. xli. 1—7; Daniel's accusers to Darius, Dan. vi. 8; Herod's to the wise men, Matt. ii.; the Pharisees' respecting the tribute money, Matt. xxii. 15; the Jews laying wait for Paul, Acts xxiii. 15.)

Prov. xii. 10. "A righteous man regardeth the life of his beast:" (Jacob, Gen. xxxiii. 13.) "But the tender mercies of the wicked are cruel." (Judah, Gen. xxxvii. 27; Pilate, Luke xxiii. 16.)

Prov. xii. 11. "He that followeth vain persons is void of understanding." (Followers of Abimelech, Judges ix.; and of Absalom, 2 Sam. xv.; of Theudas and Judas, Acts v. 36, 37.)

Prov. xii. 13. "The wicked is snared by the transgression of his lips; but the just shall come out of trouble." (Adonijah, 1 Kings ii. 23; Daniel's accusers, Dan. vi. 24; the Jews, Matt. xxvii. 25.)

Prov. xii. 15. "The way of a fool is right in his own eyes:" (Lot's sons-in-law, Gen. xix. 14; Pharisees, John ix. 34.) "But he that hearkeneth unto counsel is wise." (Moses, Exod. xviii. 19—24; Apollos, Acts xviii. 24—26; Pharaoh, Gen. xli. 37—45; Jacob, Gen. xliii. 11; Nathanael, John i. 46, 47.)

Prov. xii. 18. "There is that speaketh like the piercings of a sword:" (Saul against his son Jonathan, 1 Sam. xx. 30; Jews, John viii. 48.) "But the tongue of the wise is health." (Abigail, 1 Sam. xxv. 24—35; Jethro, Exod. xviii. 18—26; contrast Stephen and his accusers, Acts vii. 54. 57. 59, 60.)

Prov. xii. 19. "The lip of truth shall be established for ever:" (Caleb and Joshua, Numb. xiii. xiv.; Nathan to David, 2 Sam. vii. 12—17, with Luke i. 32.) "But a lying tongue is but for a moment." (Gehazi, 2 Kings v.; Ananias, Acts v.)

Prov. xii. 24. "The hand of the diligent shall bear rule." (Jero-boam, 1 Kings xi. 28; Joseph in prison, Gen. xxxix. 22.)

Prov. xii. 25. "Heaviness in the heart of man maketh it stoop: but a good word maketh it glad." (Neh. ii. 1—9; the woman that was a sinner, Luke vii. 38. 50; Mary Magdalene, John xx. 11—18; see also Luke xxiv. 17—32.)

Prov. xiii. 7. "There is that maketh himself rich, yet hath nothing." (Haman, Esther v. 13; Church of Laodicea, contrasted with the Church of Smyrna, Rev. iii. 17; ii. 9; Ahab, 1 Kings xxi. 4. 16.

22.) "There is that maketh himself poor, yet hath great riches." (Matthew, Luke v. 27, 28; Paul, 2 Cor. vi. 10; Phil. iii. 8.)

Prov. xiii. 10. "Only by pride cometh contention:" (Men of Ephraim, Judges xii. 1, &c.) "But with the well-advised is wisdom."

Prov. xiii. 24. "He that spareth his rod hateth his son; but he that loveth him chasteneth him betimes." (Eli, 1 Sam. iii. 13; David, 1 Kings i. 5, 6.)

Prov. xiv. 6. "A scorner seeketh wisdom and findeth it not:" (Athenian philosophers, Acts xvii. 18; Herod, Luke xxiii. 8; the Jews looking for the Messiah, and yet rejecting Christ, Acts xiii. 41; John ix. 29.) "But knowledge is easy unto him that understandeth." (David, Psalm cxix. 18. 98—100; see also James i. 5; Matt. xi. 25.)

Prov. xiv. 8. "The wisdom of the prudent is to understand his way:" (Job xxviii. 28; Deut. iv. 6; Eccles. xii. 13.) "But the folly of fools is deceit." (Gehazi, 2 Kings v. 20. 27; Daniel's accusers, Dan. vi. 24; Ananias and Sapphira, Acts v. 1—11.)

Prov. xiv. 32. "The wicked is driven away in his wickedness:" (Hophni and Phinehas, 1 Sam. iv. 11.) "But the righteous hath hope in his death." (Jacob, Gen. xlix. 18; Stephen, Acts vii. 55—60; Paul, 2 Tim. iv. 6—8; Peter, 2 Pet. i. 14. 16; iii. 13.)

Prov. xv. 1. "A soft answer turneth away wrath." (The Reubenites, Josh. xxii. 15—30; Gideon, Judges viii. 1—3; Abigail, 1 Sam. xxv. 23, &c.) "But grievous words stir up anger." (Rehoboam, 2 Chron. x. 13, &c.; Paul and Barnabas, Acts xv. 39; Saul and Jonathan, 1 Sam. xx. 30—34.)

Prov. xv. 8. "The sacrifice of the wicked is an abomination to the Lord:" (Cain, Gen. iv. 5; Saul, 1 Sam. xv. 15. 22.) "But the prayer of the upright is his delight." (Dan. ix. 23.)

Prov. xv. 10. "Correction is grievous unto him that forsaketh the way:" (Asa, 2 Chron. xvi. 10; the Jews, Isa. i. 5; Jer. v. 3; John viii. 40.) "And he that hateth reproof shall die." (Amaziah, 2 Kings xiv. 11; 2 Chron. xxv. 27; the Jews, 2 Chron. xxxvi. 15—17; Luke xix. 42, 43.)

Prov. xv. 14. "The heart of him that hath understanding seeketh knowledge." (Solomon, 1 Kings iii. 5—10; Nicodemus, John iii.; the Ethiopian eunuch, Acts viii. 28; Mary, Luke x. 39; Cornelius, Acts x. 33; the Bereans, Acts xvii. 11.)

Prov. xv. 23. "A word spoken in due season, how good is it!" (Naa-man's servants, 2 Kings v. 3. 13; Joseph to Pharaoh, Gen. xli. 33—37; Paul to the Philippian jailor, Acts xvi.; Manoah's wife, Jud. xiii. 22, 23.)

Prov. xv. 33. "The fear of the Lord is the instruction of wisdom:" (Thessalonians, 1 Thess. i. 9; Ephesians, Acts xix. 18—20; Eph. v. 8.) "And before honour is humility." (Joseph, Gen. xli. 16. 39, 40; Dan. ii. 30—48; Saul, 1 Sam. xv. 17; ix. 21, &c.; Ephraim, Hos. xiii. 1; Gideon, Judges vi. 15; Centurion, Matt. viii. 8.)

Prov. xvi. 9. "A man's heart deviseth his way: but the Lord directeth his steps." (Saul, 1 Sam. ix.; Joseph's brethren, Gen. xxxvii. 26—28; xlv. 5; Pharaoh's daughter, Exod. ii. 5, &c.; woman of Samaria, John iv. 7, &c.; Saul, Acts ix. 1, &c.; Zaccheus, Luke xix.)

Prov. xvi. 18. "Pride goeth before destruction, and a haughty spirit before a fall." (Goliath, 1 Sam. xvii. 42—44; Nebuchadnezzar, Dan. iv. 30, 31; Herod, Acts xii. 21—23; Asahel, 2 Sam. ii. 18—23; Benhadad, 1 Kings xx. 3. 32; Babylon, Isa. xlvii. 10, 11.)

Prov. xvii. 3. "The fining pot is for silver, and the furnace for gold: but the Lord trieth the hearts." (Abraham, Gen. xxii. 1; Hezekiah, 2 Chron. xxxii. 31; the Israelites, Deut. viii. 2; the woman of Canaan, Matt. xv. 23—28.)

Prov. xvii. 16. "Wherefore is there a price in the hand of a fool to get wisdom, seeing he hath no heart to it?" (The Jews, John v. 40; viii. 45; Nazareth, Luke iv. 28; Chorazin, Bethsaida, and Capernaum, Matt. xi. 21; the rich young man, Mark x. 17—22; Herod, Luke xxiii. 11; Pilate, John xviii. 38; the dying thief, Luke xxiii. 39; Felix, Acts xxiv. 25—27; Agrippa, Acts xxvi. 28; the Athenians, Acts xvii. 32, 33; see also 2 Chron. xxx. 10; and Heb. iv. 1, 2.)

Prov. xvii. 17. "A friend loveth at all times, and a brother is born for adversity." (Abraham, Gen. xiv. 14; Jonathan, 1 Sam. xix. xx.; Ebed-Melech, Jer. xxxviii. 3, &c.; Barzillai, 2 Sam. xix. 32; xvii. 27, &c.)

Prov. xviii. 7. "A fool's mouth is his destruction." (Children of Bethel, 2 Kings ii. 23—25; see also Luke xix. 22—27.)

Prov. xviii. 17. "He that is first in his own cause seemeth just; but his neighbour cometh and searcheth him." (Ziba, 2 Sam. xvi. 1—3; xix. 26; Tertullus, Acts xxiv. 5. 13.)

Prov. xix. 3. "The foolishness of man perverteth his way; and his heart fretteth against the Lord." (Jonah iv. 1. 4. 9; Cain, Gen. iv. 13, 14; Jehoram, 2 Kings vi. 33.)

Prov. xix. 11. "The discretion of a man deferreth his anger; and it is his glory to pass over a transgression." (Joseph, Gen. i. 21; David, 2 Sam. xix. 18—23; 1 Sam. xxiv. xxvi. 5, &c.; the Prophet of Judah, 1 Kings xiii. 6; our Lord, Luke ix. 56; xxii. 51; Moses, Numb. xii.)

Prov. xxi. 1. "The king's heart is in the hand of the Lord, as the rivers of water, : he turneth it whithersoever he will." (Cyrus, Ezra i. 1; Darius, Ezra vi. 22; Artaxerxes, Ezra vii. 27; Sennacherib, Isa. x. 7; Nebuchadnezzar, Ezek. xxix. 18, &c.; Jehoram granting the Shunammite's request, 2 Kings viii. 1—6.)

Prov. xxi. 3. "To do justice and judgment is more acceptable to the Lord than sacrifice." (Saul, 1 Sam. xiii. xv.; Judah, Isa. i. 11; Pharisees, Matt. ix. 13; and the Scribe, Mark xii. 33.)

Prov. xxi. 28. "A false witness shall perish." (Ahab and Zedekiah, Jer. xxix. 21; Hananiah, Jer. xxviii. 3. 17; Shemaiah, Jer. xxix. 32; Pashur, Jer. xx. 4—6.)

Prov. xxi. 30. "There is no wisdom nor understanding nor counsel against the Lord." (Babel, Gen. xi.; Sennacherib, 2 Kings xix. 20—28; Pharaoh, Acts vii. 19; Exod. i. 10; Herod, Matt. ii.; Herod, Acts xii.)

Prov. xxii. 8. "He that soweth iniquity shall reap vanity: and the rod of his anger shall fail." Rebekah, Gen. xxvii. 6—17. 41—46; Rechab and Baanah, 2 Sam. iv. 11, 12.)

Prov. xxiv. 17. "Rejoice not when thine enemy falleth, and let not thine heart be glad when he stumbleth." (Edom, Obad. 12; Ezek. xxxv. 15; Ammon, Ezek. xxv. 6, 7; David, 2 Sam. i. 11, 12; our Lord, Luke xix. 41. 44.)

Prov. xxv. 8. "Go not forth hastily to strive, lest thou know not what to do in the end thereof, when thy neighbour hath put thee to shame." (Men of Ephraim, Judges xii. 1—8; Abner's challenge to Joab, 2 Sam. ii. 14; Asahel's pursuit of Abner, 2 Sam. ii. 18—23; Amaziah, 2 Kings xiv. 8—15.)

Prov. xxv. 21. "If thine enemy be hungry, give him bread to eat; and if he be thirsty, give him water to drink." (Elisha, 2 Kings vi. 21, 22.)

Prov. xxvi. 28. "A flattering mouth worketh ruin." (Ahab's prophets, 1 Kings xxii.; the false prophets among the Jews, Jer. xiv. 14—16; false teachers under the Gospel, 2 Pet. ii. 1—3; 2 Thess. ii. 10; those who flattered Herod, Acts xii.)

Prov. xxvii. 17. "Iron sharpeneth iron; so a man sharpeneth the countenance of his friend." (Moses and Jethro, Exod. xviii. 7—9. Paul by Titus, 2 Cor. vii. 6. See also Acts xxviii. 15.)

Prov. xxvii. 21. "As the fining pot for silver, and the furnace for gold; so is a man to his praise." (Joseph, Gen. xli. 15, 16; Paul and Barnabas, Acts xiv. 11—15; Peter, Acts iii. 11—16; x. 25, 26; Herod, Acts xii. 21—23.)

Prov. xxviii. 1. "The wicked flee when no man pursueth:" (Adam and Eve, Gen. iii. 8; Syrian host, 2 Kings vii. 6, 7; Herod, Matt. xiv. 2.) "But the righteous are bold as a lion." (Elijah, 2 Kings i. 15; Shadrach, Dan. iii. 16—18; Nehemiah, Neh. vi. 11; Peter and John, Acts iv. 13, 19; Paul, Acts xx. 22—24; Paul before Felix, Acts xxiv. 25.)

Prov. xxviii. 13. "He that covereth his sins shall not prosper;" (Adam, Gen. iii. 12; Cain, Gen. iv. 9; Saul, 1 Sam. xv. 19—21.) "But whoso confesseth and forsaketh them shall have mercy." (David, 2 Sam. xii. 13; Manasseh, 2 Chron. xxxiii. 12, 13; the thief on the cross, Luke xxiii. 39, &c.; Prodigal son, Luke xv.)

Prov. xxviii. 26. "He that trusteth in his own heart is a fool: but whoso walketh wisely, he shall be delivered." (Hazeal, 2 Kings viii. 13; Peter, Matt. xxvi. 33; the vain confidence of Absalom, 2 Sam. xv. 4, contrasted with the diffidence of his brother Solomon, the wisest of men, 1 Kings iii. 7—9.)

Prov. xxix. 25. "The fear of man bringeth a snare." (Parents of blind man, John ix. 22; chief rulers, John xii. 42; Nicodemus, John iii.; Joseph of Arimathea, John xix. 38.) See also p. 112,

This book, though chiefly serving as a guide to our intercourse with our fellow-creatures, yet gives such views of the nature and consequences of sin^y as strongly imply our need of salvation through Christ, and of those sanctifying influences of the Holy Ghost which we are here encouraged to pray for^z. It is through the teaching of the Holy Ghost that we are made partakers of that wisdom which is treasured up in Christ, and which alone can guide us through this life to heaven. Compare ch. viii. 22, with John i. 1; 1 Cor. i. 24—30.

§ iv. *On the Book of ECCLESIASTES.*

The great subject of this book is "happiness;" and its chief object is to correct one of the commonest and most

^y Ch. i. 24; xvi. 5; xxi. 4; xxiv. 9.

^z Prov. i. 23.

fatal of all delusions, that of supposing the things of this world to be sufficient for our happiness, and pursuing them as our chief good; and also to direct us to true happiness. It especially instructs us, that knowledge is not our proper happiness^a, but, as Bishop Butler remarks, that another end is appointed to direct our lives to; an end which the most knowing may fail of, and the most ignorant arrive at; and the author sums up the purpose of the whole book in these remarkable words: "Let us hear the conclusion of the whole matter: Fear God, and keep his commandments: for this is the whole duty of man." Ch. xii. 13.

This book was evidently written by Solomon^b; and is generally considered as a penitential discourse, composed a little before his death, to warn others, by his own sad experience, of the vanity of all created things, and of the misery of sin both here and hereafter. Let the young, learning from it the guilt and danger of yielding to the imaginations of their heart^c, remember their Creator in the days of their youth^d; old age, even if they reach it, being a very unfit season to begin so infinitely important a concern as the salvation of the soul.

"Use temporal things, but desire eternal. To seek God, is to desire happiness—to find Him, is that happiness."—*Augustine.*

§ v. *On the SONG OF SOLOMON.*

This represents, under a mystical allegory, the mutual love of Christ and his Church, under the endearing relation of a bridegroom and his bride.

It was the practice of the Jews to forbid their children the reading of this book till their judgment was sufficiently matured, lest, in the fervour of youth, they should give too wide a scope to fancy, and interpret in a bad sense the spiritual ideas of Solomon—a prudent and judicious precaution.

Yet it is justly entitled a Song of Songs, or most excellent song, as being superior to any that an uninspired writer could have produced, and tending, if properly understood, to purify the mind, and raise the affections from earthly to heavenly things. (See Bp. Gray.)

^a Eccles. i. 18; xii. 12.

^c Eccles. xi. 9.

^b Eccles. i. 12. 16, with ii. 4—9; xii. 9, 10.

^d Eccles. xii. 1, &c.

For the use of similar figures in other parts of Scripture, see Ps. xlv.; Jer. iii. 12—14; Hos. ii. 14—23; Matt. ix. 15; xxii. 2; xxv. 1—11; John iii. 29; 2 Cor. xi. 2; Eph. v. 23—27; Rev. xix. 7—9; xxi. 2—9; xxii. 17.

CHAPTER IV.

THE PROPHETS.

CONTENTS.—§ i. *On the Book of the Prophet Isaiah.* § ii. *On the Book of the Prophet Jeremiah.* § iii. *On the Book of the Lamentations of Jeremiah.* § iv. *On the Book of the Prophet Ezekiel.* § v. *On the Book of the Prophet Daniel.* § vi. *On the Book of the Prophet Hosea.* § vii. *On the Book of the Prophet Joel.* § viii. *On the Book of the Prophet Amos.* § ix. *On the Book of the Prophet Obadiah.* § x. *On the Book of the Prophet Jonah.* § xi. *On the Book of the Prophet Micah.* § xii. *On the Book of the Prophet Nahum.* § xiii. *On the Book of the Prophet Habakkuk.* § xiv. *On the Book of the Prophet Zephaniah.* § xv. *On the Book of the Prophet Haggai.* § xvi. *On the Book of the Prophet Zechariah.* § xvii. *On the Book of the Prophet Malachi.* § xviii. *History of the Jews in the Period between the Old and New Testament.*

PROPHECY is interwoven with every part of the Bible, from Genesis to the Revelation; but this part is distinguished from the rest of the Old Testament by the name of “the Prophets,” partly because, though history is slightly introduced (as Isa. xxxvi.—xxxix. &c.), its leading subject is prophecy; and partly because, in the progress of God’s revelation to man, these writings hold, in the gradual development of evangelical truth, an intermediate place between the Law and the Gospel. Luke xvi. 16.

This portion of the Old Testament contains the writings of the four greater Prophets, viz. *Isaiah*, *Jeremiah* (including the Lamentations, a kind of Appendix to his prophecy), *Ezekiel*, and *Daniel*; and of the twelve minor Prophets; viz. *Hosea*, *Joel*, *Amos*, *Obadiah*, *Jonah*, *Micah*, *Nahum*, *Habakkuk*, *Zephaniah*, *Haggai*, *Zechariah*, *Malachi*.

This distinction of the Prophets into Greater and Less, alludes to the size of their books, and not in any measure to their authority or importance. They are all but parts of an entire work of a single author, the Holy Spirit dividing to every man severally as He will; and the great subject of the prophecies contained in them is the promul-

gation of the Gospel, and the complete establishment of the Messiah's kingdom.

A consideration of the fact, that the prophets were raised up, not only to prepare by their predictions for the coming of the Messiah, but also as *preachers* to their respective generations, will throw light on the scope of their writings, which may be generally described as containing—

I. *Denunciations of judgment*, with a notice of the sins which were the cause of them. In this point of view, they throw great light on the Historical Books of the Old Testament considered as a religious history; that is, a history of the moral character, rather than the political relations, of the Jews as a nation.

II. *Exhortations to repentance*: from which we may gather motives to repentance.

III. *Comfort to the truly pious*, in the midst of all the judgments denounced against the wicked. This comfort was given by Prophetic promises of the Messiah, and encouraged the Jews to look beyond the miseries around them to the joyful and eternal deliverance which, in the fulness of time, He should bring. For it may be remarked, that these prophets do not confine themselves to the first coming of Christ, but, “as if impatient to be confined to so narrow bounds, they overflow, as it were, into the more distant future, and expatiate on the principal facts of his second coming.” How deeply interesting is it to us thus to see, that faith in Christ has been the great support of the true servants of God in every age of the Church!

The prophetic Books may be thus arranged, according to the order of time in which they were written:—

- | | | |
|---|---|------------------------------|
| I. Before the captivity of the ten tribes by Shalmanezzer, king of Assyria, | } | Jonah, Amos, Hosea, |
| | | Joel, Isaiah, and Micah. |
| II. Between that and the seventy years' captivity of Judah in Babylon, | } | Nahum, Zephaniah, |
| | | Jeremiah, Habakkuk, Obadiah. |
| III. During this captivity, | } | Jeremiah, Ezekiel, |
| | | Daniel. |
| IV. After this captivity, | } | Haggai, Zechariah, |
| | | Malachi. |

Altogether they occupy a period of about 400 years, beginning about 600 years after the giving of the law at Sinai, and ending about 400 years before the coming of Christ.

If in these four periods we compare the prophetic writings with the historical books written during the same times, they will materially illustrate each other. The following table, taken from T. H. Horne's Introduction, may assist in this object:—

	Before Christ.	KINGS OF JUDAH.	KINGS OF ISRAEL.
JONAH	Between 856 and 784.		Jehu and Jehoshaphat, according to Lloyd. Joash & Jeroboam II. according to Blair.
AMOS	Between 810 and 785.	Uzziah, ch. i. 1.	Jeroboam II. ch. i. 1.
HOSEA	Between 810 and 725.	Uzziah, Jotham, Ahaz, the third year of Hezekiah.	Jeroboam II. ch. i. 1.
ISAIAH	Between 810 and 698.	Uzziah, Jotham, Ahaz, and Hezekiah, ch. i. 1, and perhaps Manasseh.	
JOEL	Between 810 and 660, or later.	Uzziah, or possibly Manasseh.	
MICAH	Between 758 and 699.	Jotham, Ahaz, and Hezekiah, ch. i. 1.	Pekah and Hosea.
NAHUM	Between 720 and 698.	Probably towards the close of Hezekiah's reign.	
ZEPHANIAH	Between 640 and 609.	Josiah, ch. i. 1.	
JEREMIAH	Between 628 and 598.	In the thirteenth year of Josiah, began to prophesy.	
HABAKKUK	Between 612 and 586.	Probably in the reign of Jehoiakim.	
DANIEL	Between 606 and 534.	During all the captivity.	
OBADIAH	Between 588 and 583.	Between the taking of Jerusalem by Nebuchadnezzar and the destruction of the Edomites by him.	
EZEKIEL	Between 595 and 536.	During part of the captivity.	
HAGGAI	About 520 to 518.	After the return from Babylon.	
ZECHARIAH	From 520 to 518.		
MALACHI	Between 436 and 397.		

§ i. *On the Book of the Prophet ISAIAH.*

B.C. BETWEEN 810 AND 698.

Of Isaiah's personal history little is known, though he was so eminent a man, and prophesied during a period of fifty or sixty years. There is a Jewish tradition that he was sawn asunder by Manasseh for his fidelity^b. But it is not the purpose of the Holy Scriptures to exalt man. We know much, however, in knowing that he had a broken and contrite spirit^c, and that he felt deep commiseration, not only for his own people^d, but for the heathen, his enemies, whose desolations he announced^e, thus showing that mind to be in him which was in Christ Jesus^f. The name of Isaiah is very descriptive of that which distinguishes his writings. Isaiah means "salvation of Jehovah:" and so pre-eminently is this the leading subject of his book, that he has been called the Evangelical Prophet.

The contents of this book may be divided into Six Parts:—

Part I. contains a general description of the state and condition of the Jews in the several periods of their history; with prophecies of the promulgation and success of the Gospel, and the coming of the Messiah to judgment, ch. i.—v. These predictions were delivered during the reign of Uzziah, king of Judah.

Part II. comprises the predictions delivered in the reigns of Jotham and Ahaz, ch. vi.—xii.

Part III. contains various predictions against the Babylonians, Assyrians, Philistines, and other nations with whom the Jews had any intercourse, ch. xii.—xxiii.

Part IV. contains a prophecy of the great calamities that should befall the people of God, of his merciful preservation of a remnant of them, and their restoration to their own country, of their conversion to the Gospel, and the destruction of Antichrist, ch. xxiv.—xxxv.

Part V. comprises the historical part of the book of Isaiah, ch. xxxvi.—xxxix. It relates the invasion of Sennacherib, and the destruction of his army in answer to

^b Heb. xi. 37.^e Isaiah xvi. 9.^c Isaiah vi. 5; lxvi.^f Phil. ii. 5.^d Isaiah xxi. 3.

Hezekiah's prayer; Hezekiah's sickness, his miraculous recovery, and the prolongation of his life for fifteen years.

Part VI. comprises a series of prophecies delivered towards the close of Hezekiah's reign, ch. xl.—lxvi. The chief subject of them is the restoration of the church. The redemption from Babylon is employed as an image, to shadow out a redemption of an infinitely higher nature; the Prophet so connecting these two events, as scarcely ever to treat of the former without introducing some allusion to the latter.

This Prophet's writings contain a view of the Gospel state, from the very birth of the Messiah to that glorious period when the kingdoms of the world shall become the kingdoms of God and his Christ. Thus are foretold—

The Divine nature of Christ^g; his human descent^h; his threefold character of Prophetⁱ, Priest^k, and King^l; his coming to be proclaimed by the Baptist^m; his appointment to preachⁿ; his miracles^o; the rejection of his personal ministry^p; his sufferings for our sins^q; his death and burial, with remarkable circumstances attending them^r; his victory over the grave^s; the rejection of the Jews^t; the call of the Gentile world^u; the increase and perfection of his kingdom^v.

The office of the Holy Spirit is also noticed^w: while it is shown that the full manifestation of his office and influence was reserved for the times of the Gospel. Ch. xxxii. 15; xxxv. 6: xliv. 3.

The moral use of prophecies against heathen nations may be thus illustrated. The prediction to the Jews of the miserable captivity of Egypt and Ethiopia^x, shows the fate of Ethiopia "their expectation," and of Egypt "their glory," and therefore the folly of fleeing to them and not to God for protection. In ch. xvii. is predicted the ruin of Damascus, the capital of Syria, and it is called "the for-

^g Isaiah vii. 14; ix. 6.

^h Isaiah xi. 1.

ⁱ Isaiah xlii. 1, 6, 7; xlix. 1, &c.; lv. 4, 5.

^k Isaiah liii. 12.

^l Isaiah ix. 6, 7; xxxii. 1, 2.

^m Isaiah xl. 3, 4, with Matt. iii. 3, &c.

ⁿ Isaiah lxi. 1, 2.

^o Isaiah xxxv. 5, 6.

^p Isaiah vi. 9—12; (with Matt. xiii. 14;) liii. 3.

^q Isaiah l. 6; liii. 4—11.

^r Isaiah liii. 10—12.

^s Isaiah xxv. 8; liii. 10—12.

^t Isaiah lxxv. 2—7.

^u Isaiah xlix. 5—12; lxxv. 1.

^v Isaiah ix. 7; xi. 4—10; lix. 16, &c.

^w Isaiah lxiii. 10, 11, 14.

^x Isaiah xx. 5.

treass of Ephraim," because the ten tribes had idolatrously put their trust in it. The remarkable predictions concerning the desolation of Idumea^y and Babylon^z, were calculated to comfort the pious Jews under the prospect of the afflictions which they were about to suffer from those nations on account of the iniquities of their countrymen, while at the same time they present a warning to the wicked of every age of the awful consequences of sin.

The authority of his more remote prophecies, such as those which related to the return from Babylon, and the Gospel times, was established by the fulfilment of some more immediate. Thus Syria and Israel were to be subdued by Assyria before Isaiah's infant son could say "my father^a." The glory of Kedar should fade in one year^b; that of Moab in three years^c; that of Ephraim in sixty-five years^d; that of Tyre in seventy years^e. The fulfilment of these prophecies would both establish the authority of the prophet, and tend to that which was a most important use of prophecy, namely, to keep up in men's minds a sense of God's providence.

In reading this and every other book of the Prophets, particular attention should be paid to the sins which peculiarly called forth the indignation of God, that we may avoid them. Thus, besides the grosser sins of bloodshed, oppression, slaying the children in the valleys, in the clefts of the rocks, &c., may be noticed covetousness^f; confounding the distinctions between right and wrong^g; self-conceit^h; disregard of God's providenceⁱ; a heart intoxicated with success, and giving itself up to worldly pleasure^k. So also the evil of pride in Babylon^l, Moab^m, Tyreⁿ, Ephraim^o, Shebna^p, Sennacherib^q, and the blessing of humility^r, are very observable. "Human philosophy thought humility incompatible with other virtues; the Bible declares all other virtues to be vices and defects without it."

^y Isaiah xxxiv.

^z Isaiah xiv. xxi.; viii. 4.

^a Isaiah viii. 4.

^b Isaiah xxi. 16.

^c Isaiah xvi. 14.

^d Isaiah vii. 8.

^e Isaiah xxiii. 15.

^f Isaiah v. 8.

^g Isaiah v. 20.

^h Isaiah v. 21.

ⁱ Isaiah v. 12; xxix. 15.

^k Isaiah xlvii. 8; xxii. 13.

^l Isaiah xiv. 13—15.

^m Isaiah xvi. 6.

ⁿ Isaiah xxiii. 9.

^o Isaiah xxviii. 3.

^p Isaiah xxii. 16—19.

^q Isaiah xxxvii. 23.

^r Isaiah lvii. 15.

§ ii. *On the Book of the Prophet JEREMIAH.*

B.C. BETWEEN 628 AND 586.

The Book of Jeremiah differs from that of Isaiah in this respect, that while it was the leading object of Isaiah to attempt the reformation of the Jews, the awful nature of Jeremiah's message was to proclaim the near desolation of his country, now hardened in impenitence. This gives a peculiar feature both to his character and writings, which has led to his being called the weeping Prophet (see chap. ix. 1). His name translated is, "He shall exalt Jehovah:" and his whole life was spent in endeavouring to promote God's glory.

Jeremiah was a priest, set apart to the prophetic office from his birth^s, and was expressly addressed by the word of God at the early age of fourteen years^t. He was called to his office nearly at the same time with Zephaniah, in the thirteenth year of Josiah, and continued to exercise it above forty years, during the reigns of the wicked sons of that pious king, to whom he fearlessly revealed those marks of the Divine vengeance which their fluctuating and rebellious conduct drew on themselves and their country^u. He was suffered to remain in Judea when Zedekiah and the nation generally were carried away captive by Nebuchadnezzar; but after the murder of Gedaliah, the governor whom Nebuchadnezzar had placed in Judea in the room of Zedekiah, Jeremiah was forced by his countrymen to retire with them into Egypt^v, where, according to the account of St. Jerome, he was stoned to death for his bold reproof of their iniquities. He appears during his whole life to have been exposed to cruel persecutions from the Jews, and especially from those of his own village^w. In his character is presented a bright example of the strictest fidelity in reproofing sin, united with the deepest compassion for the sinner.

His predictions are not arranged in this book as they were delivered. The following order may be adopted, for the sake of classing them more nearly according to their dates :

^s Jer. i. 5.

xxxii. 3, 4; xxxiv. 2—6;

^t Bp. Gray's Key to the Old Testament.

xxxvi. 30, 31.

^v Jer. xliii. 3—7.^u Chap. xxi. 4—11; xxiv. 8. 10;^w Jer. xi. 21; Luke iv. 24.

Part I. The prophecies delivered in the reign of the good king Josiah, ch. i.—xii. inclusive.

(During the short reign of Shallum or Jehoahaz, his second son, who succeeded Josiah—no prophecies.)

Part II. The prophecies delivered in the reign of Jehoiakim, the eldest son of Josiah, ch. xiii.—xx. xxii. xxiii. xxv. xxvi. xlv.—xlviii. xlix. 1—33.

(During the short reign of Jeconiah, or Jehoiachin, or Coniah, the son and successor of Jehoiakim—no prophecies.)

Part III. The prophecies delivered in the reign of Zedekiah, the uncle of Jeconiah, youngest son of Josiah, and the last of the kings of Judah, ch. xxi. xxiv. xxvii.—xxxiv. xxxvii.—xxxix. xlix. 34—39; 1. li.

Part IV. The prophecies delivered in the government of Gedaliah, from the taking of Jerusalem to the retreat of the people into Egypt, and the prophecies delivered to the Jews in that country, ch. xl.—xliv. inclusive.

Ch. lii. was added after Jeremiah's death. It is a short historical account of the taking of Jerusalem.

Jeremiah foretels the precise time of the Babylonish captivity*, the destruction of Babylon, and the downfall of many other nations alluded to by Isaiah. A remarkable feature of his prophecies against several of these nations, was the publicity he gave them among those nations, by sending bonds and yokes to their kings, ch. xxvii. 3.

From his predictions also may be clearly shown, that the prophets under the Mosaic law foresaw its abrogation, and acknowledged it was intended to introduce the Gospel scheme. He speaks of the ark being no more remembered, of the abolition of legal ordinances, the propagation of a more spiritual religion, and says that the new covenant which God would make with Messiah would set aside the old one. He also foretels the call of the Gentiles, and the final restoration of Israel. (Jer. iii. 15—18; xxxi. particularly verses 31—34, with Heb. x. 15, &c.)

Of the prophecies in this book more immediately pointing to Christ, the following may be noticed:—

Ch. xxiii. 5, 6, foretels the mediatorial kingdom of the Messiah, who is called the Lord, or Jehovah, our Righteous-

* Jer. xxv. 12; xxix. 10.

ness. The title of Jehovah is elsewhere given to the Messiah by the prophets. (Isa. xl. 10; xlviii. 17; Hosea i. 7; Mal. iii. 1.)

Ch. xxxi. 31—34; xxxiii. 8, clearly and forcibly describe the efficacy of Christ's atonement, the spiritual character of the Gospel, and its excellence in giving, not only pardon, but holiness. (See Heb. viii. 8—13, and x. 14, &c.)

For the first fulfilment of the prophecies respecting the return of the Jews, read Ezra and Nehemiah.

§ iii. *On the Book of the LAMENTATIONS OF JEREMIAH.*

The Lamentations of Jeremiah are composed after the manner of funeral hymns. They express, with most pathetic tenderness, his grief for the desolation of Jerusalem, the captivity of Judah, the miseries of famine, the cessation of all religious worship, and the various other calamities with which his countrymen had been visited, according to his predictions.

His leading object is to teach his countrymen neither to despise the chastening of the Lord, nor to faint when they were rebuked of Him, but turning to God with deep repentance, to look to Him alone for deliverance. It is a book suited to those under affliction, particularly ch. iii.

When we consider the ill-treatment which Jeremiah received from his countrymen, the spirit which he here displays is a striking illustration of the influence of the Holy Ghost on the heart of a true servant of God.

§ iv. *On the Book of the Prophet EZEKIEL.*

B.C. BETWEEN 595 AND 536.

Ezekiel was, like Jeremiah, a priest as well as a prophet. He was among the first of the captives carried by Nebuchadnezzar to Babylon, with Jehoiachin, king of Judah, and his ministry was to his captive countrymen, among whom he prophesied for about twenty-one years. They, not seeing the prophecies of Jeremiah fulfilled by the destruction of the temple and city of Jerusalem, considered

their own condition to be far worse than that of their brethren who yet remained in Judea. Ezekiel, therefore,

I. Describes, in confirmation of Jeremiah's prophecies, the calamities about to arise in Judea, attributing them to the same cause—the wickedness of the inhabitants:

II. Reproves his captive countrymen for their murmuring and continued impenitence:

III. Invites them to repentance, with the prospect of the fulfilment of God's promises to them in the destruction of those enemies who were insulting over their afflictions; promising their restoration, and interspersing these assurances with prophetic declarations of the coming of the Messiah, and of the spiritual blessings He would communicate.

As to the moral intention of the obscurity of his prophecies, written in the gloom of captivity, it appears to have been God's design to cheer the drooping spirits of his people, but only by communicating such encouragement as was consistent with a state of punishment, and calculated, by indistinct intimations of future blessings, to awaken repentance, and keep alive a watchful and submissive confidence. See Bp. Tomline.

His prophecies and character are marked by a peculiar energy, of which his name is expressive; Ezekiel meaning "the power of God girding with strength."

His writings may be divided into four parts.

Part I. contains the glorious appearance of God to the prophet, and his solemn appointment to his office, with instructions and encouragement for the discharge of it, ch. i.—iii.

Part II. contains denunciations against the Jewish people, foretelling the total destruction of the temple and city of Jerusalem, and occasionally predicting another period of yet greater desolation, and more general dispersion, ch. iv.—xxiv.

Part III. contains prophecies against various neighbouring nations, enemies and oppressors of the Jews, ch. xxv.—xxxii.

Part IV. contains a series of warnings, exhortations, and promises to the Jews, of future deliverance under Cyrus, but principally of their final restoration and conversion under the kingdom of the Messiah, ch. xxxiii.—xlvi.

Among the many topics which may be noticed in this book, are the self-denial and suffering to which Ezekiel was called in the discharge of his office^y, and yet his ardent love for his countrymen^z; the wickedness of the Jews at Jerusalem immediately before their destruction, particularly illustrated by the conduct of Pelatiah, and his awful death, producing no change in their conduct^a; the deceit they practised on themselves in the commission of sin^b; the mention of disobedience to parents, and profanation of the Sabbath^c, as among the sins which brought upon them God's wrath; the disregard of Ezekiel's ministry by the Jews in captivity^d; the conduct of the Jews in Judea, who, after the destruction of Jerusalem^e, instead of being awed by so terrible a visitation, persisted in the same sins, and confidently hoped to be enriched by the ruin of their brethren. These are views of human nature given by the Holy Spirit for our admonition. Observe also Pharaoh's pride, and God's notice of it^f.

The vision of the dry bones, setting forth the restoration of the people of Israel, illustrates to us the only means by which our nature can be raised from the death of sin to the life of righteousness^g. But let us remember, that though God works in us to will and to do^h, we must seek his grace by sincere prayerⁱ. The elders of Israel, regarding iniquity in their hearts, were not heard^k.

Of the prophecies and types respecting the Messiah's kingdom, may be particularly noticed—

The prophecies in which Christ is spoken of in the character of a shepherd, and under the title of David, as being the person in whom all the promises made to David are fulfilled^l; and the vision of the holy waters, issuing out of the temple, and their virtue^m; a most beautiful emblem of the gradual progress of the Gospel, and of the influences of the Holy Spirit accompanying it.

y Ezek. iv. ; xxiv. 15, 16.

z Ezek. ix. 8; xi. 13.

a Ezek. xi. 1. 13.

b Ezek. viii. 12; ix. 9.

c Ezek. xxii. 7.

d Ezek. xxxiii. 30—32.

e Ezek. xxxiii. 21—24.

f Ezek. xxix. 3. 9.

Psalm xi. 4; cxxxix. 1—4.

g Ezek. xxxvii, with

Eph. i. 19, &c.; ii. 1.

h Phil. ii. 13.

i Ezek. xxxvi. 26, 27. 37.

k Ezek. xiv. 1—4, with

Psalm lxvi. 18.

l Ezek. xxxiv. 23; xxxvii. 24.

m Ezek. xlvii. 1—12.

§ v. *On the Book of the Prophet DANIEL.*

B.C. BETWEEN 606 AND 534.

Daniel was not, like Jeremiah and Ezekiel, a priest, but like Isaiah, of the tribe of Judah, and probably of the royal family. He was carried to Babylon in the fourth year of Jehoiakim, king of Judah, in the year B. C. 606 (*i. e.* eight years before Ezekiel), and probably about the eighteenth year of his age. He was placed in the court of Nebuchadnezzar, and was afterwards raised to great rank and power in the courts both of the Babylonish and the Persian princesⁿ. He died at a very advanced age, having prophesied during the whole period of the seventy years' captivity. His last vision, respecting the succession of the kings of Persia, was written in his ninetieth year, and the third year of the reign of Cyrus. His eminence for wisdom and piety, even in early life, appears from Ezekiel xiv. 14—20, and xxviii. 3, to have been almost proverbial; and this book shows he preserved that eminence to its close, amidst the temptations of deepest adversity and most exalted prosperity.

This book may be divided into two parts.

Part I. is chiefly historical, comprising the education of Daniel and his three friends, their advancement and trials issuing in their great honour, the punishment of Nebuchadnezzar, and the fall of Babylon, ch. i.—vi.

Part II. comprises various prophecies respecting the four great monarchies of Assyria, Persia, Greece, and Rome^o—

ⁿ Proverbs xxi. 1.

^o The selection of these monarchies as subjects of prophecy illustrates the remark already made, that the Messiah and his kingdom are the great subjects of prophecy.

“There have been,” as Bishop Newton remarks, “as great or greater empires than some of those, as those of the Tartars, for instance, and of the Saracens, and of the Turks; and we may think perhaps they were as well deserving of a place in this succession of kingdoms, and were equally worthy to be made the objects of prophecy, being as eminent for the wisdom of their constitution, the extent of their dominion, and the length of their duration. But these four empires had a particular relation to the Church and people of God, who were subject to them in their turn. They were, therefore, particularly predicted, and we have in them, without the intermixture of others, a line of prophecy extending from the reign of Nebuchadnezzar to the full and complete establishment of the kingdom of the Messiah.”—Bp. Newton.

to be succeeded by the establishment of Christianity; the division of the empire of Alexander into four, and of the Roman into ten kingdoms; the persecution of the Jews by Antiochus Epiphanes: the desolation of Jerusalem, and of the sanctuary; the power and destruction of Antichrist; distinct assurance of the resurrection of the just and the unjust^p, chap. vii.—xii.

Of the prophecies more particularly referring to the person and office of Christ, the following are very observable:—

Chap. ix. 24—26, foretels his atonement, stating the exact time when He would thus make a reconciliation for iniquity, and bring in everlasting righteousness.

Chap. vii. 13, 14, speaks of Him as the “Son of man,” and unfolds the scene when He should appear coming in clouds to the Father, to receive dominion and glory, and a kingdom, that all people, nations, and languages, should serve Him. See Matt. xxviii. 18; Acts i. 9; ii. 34; vii. 56; Eph. i. 20—22; Phil. ii. 9—11; Heb. i. 3; Rev. xix. 16.

Much may often be learned by observing the occasions when prophecies were delivered. Thus the glorious display of the great work of Redemption was made to Daniel when in the act of prayer, deeply bewailing his sin. Compare Dan. ix. 4. 21, &c. with Isa. lvii. 15.

The book of Daniel was written in the darkness of the most terrible captivity the Church had ever suffered. “By the rivers of Babylon, there we sat down, yea, we wept when we remembered Zion. We hanged our harps upon the willows in the midst thereof^q.” But then “the harp of prophecy was most inspired with hope, then the grandest revelations were made of the future glories of the Church, and of the providence of God controlling all events for her good.”—See *Davison on Prophecy*; particularly in reference to the adaptation of prophecy to the exigencies of religion.

The prophecies of this book extend from the first establishment of the Persian empire, more than 500 years before Christ, to the general resurrection. The fulfilment of some of these prophecies gives us the greatest assurance that the rest will also be fulfilled, and at the same time

^p Dan. xii. 2, 3.

^q Psalm cxxxvii.

affords an unanswerable proof that the Bible is the word of God^r. It shows, moreover, that (to use an expression of Bishop Butler) the world is God's world^s; that God is the Judge; that He putteth down one and setteth up another^t; and that the manifestation of his glory, in the salvation of man, is the great purpose He is carrying on in it.

The wisdom of God in overruling the punishment of the Jews to the spreading of the knowledge of Himself among the Gentiles, is very striking. Their seventy years' captivity in Babylon, and the miraculous events recorded in this book, would prove before the world, what Nebuchadnezzar^u and Darius^v were forced to acknowledge, that the God of Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego, the God of Daniel, was the living God, the great King above all gods. See also Ezra i. 3, with regard to Cyrus.

§ vi. *On the Book of the Prophet HOSEA.*

B.C. BETWEEN 810 AND 725.

Hosea was contemporary with Isaiah, and began to prophesy a little before him (compare Isa. i. 1, and Hosea i. 1). But whereas Isaiah touches frequently on the history of surrounding nations, and prophesies chiefly to Judah, Hosea does not refer to other nations, and prophesies almost exclusively to the ten tribes, whom he addresses not only under the title of Israel, but also under the title of Samaria, which was the capital of the kingdom, and under the title also of Ephraim, which was the most distinguished of the ten tribes, and to which Jeroboam, their first king, belonged. The great sin of that king, in having set up the calves at Dan and Bethel, uninterruptedly persisted in by the Israelites during the course of 150 years, had spread every form of vice among priests and people; and though, when Hosea began to prophesy in the reign of Jeroboam the Second, there was great outward prosperity, iniquity was fast working their ruin. Hosea, therefore, in the strongest terms points out their guilt and danger, using the expressive figures of adultery and whoredom to reprove

^r Isaiah xlv. 9, 10.

^u Dan. iii. 28; iv. 34.

^s Psalm lxxv. 7.

^v Dan. vi. 26.

^t Dan. ii. 35; ix. 24.

their idolatry, which implied the violation of their covenant with God, and the alienation of their affections from Him; and in the most earnest manner calls them to repentance, showing how vain was their dependence on other nations, and their pursuit of happiness in departure from God: they were sowing the wind, and would reap the whirlwind. He laboured more than sixty years, but with very little success, and probably lived to see his awful threatenings executed in the captivity of the ten tribes. He was a bright example, in the midst of an adulterous and sinful generation, of persevering fidelity under the greatest discouragements.

The principal events predicted in this book are—the captivity and dispersion of the kingdom of Israel^w; the deliverance of Judah from Sennacherib, figurative of salvation by Christ^x; the present destitute state of the Jews^y; their future restoration and union with the Gentiles in the kingdom of the Messiah^z; the call of our Saviour out of Egypt^a; and his resurrection on the third day^b, while the assurance of a final ransom to his people from the power of death and the grave is celebrated in the loftiest strains of triumph and exultation^c.

Chap. vi. xiii. xiv. will be found particularly useful to awaken those feelings of repentance and faith, which it is the daily duty of every Christian to cherish. May each of us learn what is here enforced by God upon Israel, “Thou hast destroyed thyself, but in me is thy help!” Chap. xiii. 9.

§ vii. *On the Book of the Prophet JOEL.*

B.C. BETWEEN 810 AND 660.

Joel is supposed to have delivered his prophecies soon after Hosea had commenced his ministry. As Hosea's were addressed to Israel, so were those of Joel to Judah.

^w Hosea v. 5. 7; ix. 3. 6—11;
x. 5, 6; xiii. 16.

^x Hosea i. 7, with
2 Kings xix. 35.

^y Hosea iii. 4.

^z Hosea i. 10, 11; iii. 5, with
Rom. ix. 24. 26.

^a Hosea xi. 1, with
Matt. ii. 15.

^b Hosea vi. 2, with
1 Cor. xv. 4.

^c Hosea xiii. 14, with
1 Cor. xv. 55.

He sets forth with peculiar force the terrible judgments threatened against them, exhorts them to repentance, fasting, and prayer, and promises the favour of God to those who should be obedient.

The principal events predicted in this book are—the Chaldean invasion, under the figure of locusts, &c.^d; the destruction of Jerusalem by Titus^e, described with such force and aggravation of circumstances, as to be in some measure descriptive of that final judgment which every temporal dispensation of the Almighty must faintly prefigure; the blessings of the Gospel dispensation; the general outpouring of the Holy Spirit which was to accompany it^f; the conversion and restoration of the Jews to their own land; the destruction of the enemies of God; and the glorious state of the Christian Church which is to follow it^g.

Joel is generally supposed to have lived in the reign of Uzziah, and to have predicted the overthrow of Judah by the Chaldeans, at the time when Uzziah was confiding in his military power, and “his heart was lifted up to his destruction.” 2 Chron. xxvi. 16.

§ viii. *On the Book of the Prophet AMOS.*

B.C. BETWEEN 810 AND 785.

Amos was a herdsman and gatherer of sycomore fruit^h; not having had any regular education in the schools of the prophets, but being called by the Holy Spirit as he followed the flockⁱ. He who “selects his ministers as well from the tents of the shepherd as from the palace of the sovereign,” qualified him for the duties to which He called him. See 1 Cor. i. 27. 29.

• Amos was contemporary with Hosea, and, like him, directed his prophecies chiefly to the ten tribes of Israel; though not exclusively, for he denounces judgments also against Judah, and threatens the kingdoms that bordered on Palestine, — as the Syrians, Philistines, Tyrians,

^d Joel i. 4, &c.

^e Joel ii. 30, &c., with
Matt. xxiv. 29.

Luke xxi. 11.

^f Joel ii. 28—32, with Acts ii.
17—21; xxi. 9.

^g Joel iii.

^h Amos vii. 14.

ⁱ Amos vii. 14, 15, with
2 Pet. i. 21.

Edomites, Ammonites, and Moabites. He foretels in clear terms the captivity of the ten tribes, and the awful calamities attending it^k; concluding with assurances that God would not utterly destroy the house of Jacob, but after sifting, as it were, and cleansing it, among the nations, He would raise it again to more than its former splendour and happiness in the kingdom of the Messiah, by the accession of Gentile subjects. Compare ch. ix. 11—15, with Acts xv. 16.

No prophet has more magnificently described the Deity, more gravely rebuked the luxurious, or reproved injustice and oppression with greater warmth or more generous indignation.—Dr. Gray.

§ ix. *On the Book of the Prophet OBADIAH.*

B.C. BETWEEN 588 AND 583.

Obadiah probably lived about the same time with Jeremiah and Ezekiel, and delivered his prophecy soon after the destruction of Jerusalem by Nebuchadnezzar.

It denounces the utter destruction of the Edomites or Idumæans, the descendants of Esau, who, proud of their wisdom, and of their fancied security among the clefts of the rock, had rejoiced at the destruction of the children of Judah, had insulted them in their affliction, though they were descendants of Jacob, the brother of Esau. From their doom we may learn how hateful are such dispositions in the sight of God: "He that is not concerned that his brother should not perish, is in great danger of perishing himself." The prophet assures us that the people of God, though chastened, shall not be finally cast off; and that the great Redeemer, whom preceding deliverers had foreshadowed, shall reign over every enemy. Compare verse 21 with Luke i. 33; Rev. xi. 15; xix. 6.

§ x. *On the Book of the Prophet JONAH.*

B.C. BETWEEN 856 AND 784.

Two remarkable circumstances characterize this book:—*First*.—That though Jonah is placed fifth in the order of

^k Amos viii. 8—14.

the minor prophets, he is generally considered as the most ancient of all the prophets whose writings we possess¹. He is thought by some to have lived in the beginning of the reign of Jehoahaz, when Hazael, by his cruel treatment of Israel, was verifying the predictions of Elisha^m. He is mentioned in 2 Kings xiv. 25.

Secondly.—That he here appears as a prophet to the Gentiles. The subject of this book, which is chiefly narrative, is Jonah's mission to Nineveh, a city equally distinguished for its magnificence and corruption, its careless merriment and licentious dissipation. Nineveh was much greater than Babylon, and may be said to have been at that time the chief city of the Gentile world.

The Book of Jonah may be thus divided:

Ch. i. ii. relate the *first* mission of Jonah, his disobedience and punishment.

Ch. iii. iv. the *second* mission—his success, and yet his discontent.

Very instructive views of the attributes of God are given in this book:—His long-suffering to sinners in sparing the Ninevites on their repentance; the tenderness with which while He chastened, He bore with his servant Jonah; his overruling Jonah's punishment as a sign to the Ninevites; the miracle attending that punishment proving his Divine mission. Thus does God bring good out of evil. Did Jonah, when fleeing from the presence of the Lord, find a ship ready to take him to Tarshish? This shows us we must never so interpret the events of God's providence, as to imagine they will justify us in a departure from his word.

Much also of the character of man, his depravity and inconsistency, appears in Jonah's disobedient conduct under reproof. His prayer expresses deep repentance. Yet again we are called to notice his discontent and proud repining at that mercy being extended to others, of which he had lately been so distinguished a monument. Compare Jonah iv. with Job vii. 17.

¹ Elisha's ministry reaches nearly to that of Jonah, and from Jonah, we enter the prophetic canon.—*Davison on Prophecy.*

^m 2 Kings viii. 12; x. 32; xiii. 22.

As it is generally agreed that Jonah was the writer of this book, this record of his sin affords another illustration of that strict regard to truth in the sacred writers, which has been already noticed among the grounds of their claim to inspiration.

This book also contains a reference to our Lord Jesus Christ. The time of Jonah's continuance in the belly of the fish was a type of our Lord's continuance in the graveⁿ.

Thus (as Davison remarks), in the first and oldest of the prophets, we perceive that the first image, the introductory representation, which meets us in the opening of the prophetic canon, when we explore it in a Christian sense, is that of the great fact of Christ's resurrection.

§ xi. *On the Book of the Prophet MICAH.*

B.C. BETWEEN 758 AND 699.

Micah prophesied in the reigns of Jotham, Ahaz, and Hezekiah, kings of Judah, contemporary with whom were Pekah and Hosea, the last two kings of Israel. He began to prophesy a little after Isaiah, confirming his predictions both against Judah and Israel, urging them to repentance both by threatened judgments and promised mercies. One of his predictions is related to have saved the life of Jeremiah^o. He foretels in clear terms the invasion of Shalmaneser^p, and that of Sennacherib^q; the cessation of prophecy^r; and the utter destruction of Jerusalem^s by Vespasian: yet for the encouragement of the pious, he also predicts the destruction of Assyria, the representative of the enemies of the Christian Church^t; the promulgation of the Gospel from Mount Zion; its beneficial effects^u; the birth-place of Christ; his Divine nature, "whose goings forth have been from of old, from everlasting^v;" and the

ⁿ Matt. xii. 39, 40.

^o Micah iii. 12, with
Jer. xxvi. 18—24.

^p Micah i. 6—8.
2 Kings xvii. 4. 6.

^q Micah i. 9—16.
2 Kings xviii. 13.

^r Micah iii. 6, 7.

^s Micah iii. 12.

^t Micah vii. 8. 10.

^u Micah iv. 1—8, with
Isaiah ii. 2—4.

^v Micah v. 2, with
Matt. ii. 6.

John vii. 42.

exaltation of his kingdom over all nations (compare ch. iv. 2. 7, with Luke i. 33; ch. v. 5, with Eph. ii. 14; and ch. vii. 18. 20, with Luke i. 72, 73). This was a splendid anticipation of those glorious displays of Divine mercy to be more fully revealed in the New Testament.

In illustration of the spirit of love which distinguishes the writers of the Bible (as referred to p. 18), observe the deep sorrow of the prophet ^w on account of the calamities which he foretels, and how he tempers his denunciations of judgment with promises of mercy ^x.

§ xii. *On the Book of the Prophet NAHUM.*

B.C. BETWEEN 720 AND 698.

This book is a striking illustration of the moral use of prophecy; by which is meant, that the prophecies of Scripture are not mere anticipations of the future, but are intended, by confirming the faith of the true believer, to strengthen him for his present duties.

Nahum probably prophesied in the period between Israel's being carried captive into Assyria by Shalmaneser, and the destruction of Jerusalem being attempted by Sennacherib. At this period of perplexity and distress, when the fate of Samaria was present to the apprehension of Judah, when her own cities had been taken by Sennacherib, and Hezekiah had drained his treasure, and even despoiled the temple, in the vain hope of turning away the fury of Sennacherib^y, then was Nahum, whose name signifies "comforter," raised up to console Judah, and to proclaim destruction to him that imagined evil against the Lord^z.

His prophecy is one entire poem, which opens with a sublime description of the justice and power of God, tempered with long-suffering^a, and foretels the destruction of Sennacherib's forces, and the subversion of the Assyrian empire^b, together with the deliverance of Hezekiah, and the death of Sennacherib^c. The destruction of Nineveh is

^w Micah i. 8.

^x Micah vii. 18.

^y 2 Kings xviii. 16.

^z Nahum i. 11, &c.

^a Nahum i. 1—8.

^b Nahum i. 9—12.

^c Nahum i. 13—15.

then predicted in the most glowing colours, and with singular minuteness; and profane history assures us that these predictions have been exactly fulfilled^d.

The Book of Nahum will be best understood (remarks Davison) by being read as a continuation or supplement to the Book of Jonah. The prophecies of both are directed against Nineveh. They form connected parts of one moral history; the remission of God's judgments being illustrated in one—the execution of them in the other.

§ xiii. *On the Book of the Prophet HABAKKUK.*

B.C. BETWEEN 612 AND 598.

Habakkuk probably prophesied in the reign of Jehoiakim, king of Judah, in the time of Jeremiah, a few years before the captivity of the Jews by Nebuchadnezzar.

Of all the nations that had most afflicted the Jews, and in them the Church of God, the chief were—the Edomites—the Assyrians—the Chaldeans; and three of the prophets were raised up on purpose to pronounce the destruction of these nations: Obadiah, that of the Edomites; Nahum, that of the Assyrians, who had carried the ten tribes into captivity; and now Habakkuk, that of the Chaldeans, who completed the captivity of the remaining tribes.

This book remarkably breathes a spirit of prayer. It expresses the prophet's holy indignation at the iniquity of his countrymen, with earnest intercession for their welfare. The concluding prayer, in which he describes the wonders God had wrought for Israel in times past, was admirably calculated to inspire the pious among them with confidence in the prospect of their approaching calamity—the destruction of Jerusalem, and their captivity in Babylon.

From ch. ii. 3, 4, we may observe the great principle which forms the character of the true servant of God in every age—a passage quoted three times in the New Testament (Rom. i. 17; Gal. iii. 11; Heb. x. 37, 38; see also Heb. xi.; Gal. ii. 20). This principle will enable us, like Habakkuk^e, to joy even in tribulation. Rom. v. 1—3.

^d Nahum ii. iii.

^e Habakkuk iii. 17—19.

§ xiv. *On the Book of the Prophet ZEPHANIAH.*

B.C. BETWEEN 640 AND 609.

Zephaniah was contemporary with Jeremiah, and prophesied with the same object, viz. to declare that the great day of trouble, distress, desolation, and darkness was at hand in the approaching captivity of Judah^f, and to point out the sins which were the causes of it. He denounces God's wrath against the nations which assisted in oppressing the Jews, or rejoiced over them in their calamities; and he foretels their present dispersion and ultimate conversion, when the name of God, through them, shall be glorified throughout the world.

He describes the desolation of Nineveh with remarkable accuracy. See ii. 14, 15; compare also iii. 10, with Acts viii. 27.

Zephaniah prophesied in the early part of Josiah's reign; assisting him in his zealous effort of bringing back the people to the worship and obedience of the true God.

To awaken an interest on the subject of fulfilled prophecy, and to show the connexion between the prophetic books, it may be remarked, that by comparing Amos i. 6—8, and Zechariah ix. 5, with Zephaniah ii. 4—6, it will appear that the prophets made the following discrimination as to the fate of the four neighbouring and chief cities of Philistia, viz. Gaza, Ashkelon, Ashdod, and Ekron. They declared of Gaza, that baldness should come upon it, that it should be forsaken and bereaved of its king. At the present moment, as Keith remarks, amid ruins of white marble, showing its former princely magnificence, a few villages badly built of dried mud are the only abode of its inhabitants, amounting altogether to less than 2000. Of Ashkelon and Ashdod they had said, "I will cut off the inhabitants from Ashdod; Ashkelon shall be a desolation—it shall not be inhabited:" and so it is. Gaza is inhabited, but Ashkelon and Ashdod are not; their ruins mark their site, but no human being lives there; they are the abode only of scorpions, though many hundreds of years after

^f Zephaniah i. 15.

these prophecies were delivered they were among the most celebrated cities. But as distinct from Gaza, which was to be the abode of poverty, and Ashkelon and Ashdod, which were to exist, but be without inhabitants, it was foretold of Ekron, "it shall be rooted up:" and such is the fact. Its very name is lost, nor is the spot certain on which it stood; though at the time the predictions were uttered, it was equally flourishing with the rest.

One great intention of prophecy, as has been already remarked, is to keep up in men's minds a sense of God's providence; and, with such facts, and such prophecies before them, who can doubt either the providence of God, or the inspiration of those Scriptures in which such prophecies abound?

We are now brought to the prophets Haggai, Zechariah, and Malachi, who flourished after the return of the Jews from Babylon; and their predictions (as Davison remarks) are confined almost entirely to two subjects:—1. The re-establishment of the Hebrew people and their temple;—2. The annunciation of the Gospel.

§ xv. *On the Book of the Prophet HAGGAI.*

B.C. ABOUT 520 TO 518.

Haggai is generally reputed to have been born in the captivity, and to have returned from Babylon with Zerubabel^g. He is the first of the three prophets who flourished among the Jews after their return to their country; and appears to have been raised up by God to exhort Zerubabel^h and Joshua the high-priest to resume the work of the temple, which had been interrupted nearly fourteen years by the Samaritans and others, artfully attempting to defeat the edict of Cyrusⁱ. But now that these hindrances were removed, the Jews had become lukewarm in this great public work, and more solicitous to build and adorn their own houses than to labour in the service of God. He continued prophesying about four months, and his earnest remonstrance appears to have had the desired effect^k.

^g Ezra ii. 2.

^h Ezra v. 1.

ⁱ Ezra iv. 24.

^k Ezra vi. 14.

Of the prophecies more immediately relating to the Messiah and his kingdom, we may remark the following:—

Ch. ii. 7—9, foretels that the second temple, though much inferior as a building to the first, should far exceed it in glory. This was fulfilled by our Blessed Lord, in whom dwelt all the fulness of the Godhead bodily¹, honouring it with his presence and preaching.

Ch. ii. 20—23, also predicts the important revolutions which would precede the great and final coming of the Messiah, typically described under the name of Zerubbabel, when the kingdoms of the world would become subject to his chosen servant^m. The grandeur of this event was, perhaps, foreshadowed in the temporal commotions which happened before the first coming of our Saviour, viz. the subversion of the Persian monarchy by the Grecian, and of the Grecian by the Romans; and in the terrible destruction of Jerusalem, and the ruin of the civil government of the Jews shortly after his ascension.

§ xvi. *On the Book of the Prophet ZECHARIAH.*

B.C. FROM 520 TO 518, OR LONGER.

Zechariah began to prophesy about two months after Haggai, in the second year of Darius Hystaspes, and continued to prophesy about two years. He had the same general object with Haggai, to encourage and urge the Jews to rebuild the temple, and restore its public ordinances. A blessing, we are toldⁿ, attended his ministry. The temple was finished in about six years.

With this immediate object were connected, as was the universal custom of the prophets, others more remote and important. He emblematically describes the four great empires (the chariots and horses probably representing the Babylonian, Persian, Macedonian, and Roman empires^o); he foretels many circumstances respecting the future condition of the Jews, and their destruction by the Romans^p;

¹ Col. ii. 9.

^o Zech. vi. 1.

^m Dan. ii. 44; Rev. xi. 15.

^p Zech. xiv. &c.

ⁿ Ezra vi. 14.

and with these he intersperses many moral instructions and admonitions.

Of his predictions relative to our Saviour and his kingdom, the following may be compared:—

Ch. ii. 10, 11, with John i. 14: a remarkable allusion to the Divinity of Christ. "It being here said that Jehovah being sent by Jehovah, should come and dwell in the Church, enlarged by the accession of the Gentiles; who can that be but our Lord Christ who dwelt among us; and was by God his Father sent to us?"—Barrow.

Ch. iv. 6, 7, alludes to the Holy Spirit perfecting strength in the weakness of his people, and rendering his Church triumphant over all opposition.

Ch. ix. 9, with Matt. xxi. 2—9: our Lord's riding into Jerusalem.

Ch. xi. 12, 13, with Matt. xxvi. 15; xxvii. 3—10: what our Lord would be sold for, and what would be done with the money.

Ch. xii. 10, with John xix. 34—37, and Rev. i. 7: the piercing of our Lord's side: alluding also to the final conversion of the Jews, and their bitter compunction for having murdered the Messiah.

Ch. xiii. 1, with 1 John i. 7: the promulgation of the Gospel; and its distinguishing feature, deliverance from the guilt and power of sin through the blood of Christ.

Ch. xiii. 7, with Phil. ii. 6; John x. 30: an atonement made by God manifest in the flesh; "the man that is my fellow, saith the Lord of Hosts."

Ch. xiii. 7, with Matt. xxvi. 31: the desertion of our Lord by his Apostles.

Ch. vi. 10—15; xiv. 8, 9: the glory of the Christian Church, uniting Jew and Gentile, under their great High-Priest and Governor, Jesus Christ, of whom Joshua the high-priest, and Zerubbabel the governor, were types—a priest upon his throne, exercising dominion over all the earth.

It thus appears, from the foregoing references, that, next to Isaiah, Zechariah has the most frequent and plain allusions to the character and coming of Christ; and he even specifies some points which had not been noticed by Isaiah.

§ xvii. *On the Book of the Prophet MALACHI.*

B.C. BETWEEN 436 AND 397.

Malachi is the last of the prophets of the Old Testament, as Nehemiah is of the historians; and the time of his ministry nearly coincides with that of Nehemiah's administration.

His immediate object as a *Minister* was to reprove the Jews for many great abuses which, even so soon after such judgments and such mercies as attended their captivity and return from Babylon, still prevailed among both priests and people.

Compare Mal. ii. 11, with Neh. xiii. 23—31: and Mal. i. 10; iii. 8, with Neh. xiii. 10, 11.

But his object as a *Prophet* was to foretel the coming of our Lord, the Messenger of the covenant, the Sun of righteousness, and his forerunner, John the Baptist. As the spirit of prophecy was now to cease, the Messiah having been clearly and progressively made known to the Jews by a long succession of prophets more and more distinct in their predictions, Malachi with peculiar solemnity concludes his mission, seals up the volume of prophecy by a description of a prophet, which is applied in the New Testament to him, with an account of whom the Evangelists begin their Gospel history.

“Prophecy had been the oracle of the Mosaic and Christian dispensations, to uphold the authority of the one, and reveal the promise of the other; and now its latest admonitions were like those of a faithful departing minister embracing and summing up his duties. Resigning its charge to the personal precursor of Christ, it expired with the Gospel on its tongue.”—Davison.

The following TABLE, showing when each Prophecy was written, is extracted from TOWNSEND's valuable Work on the OLD TESTAMENT.

Prophecy.	After what Scripture.	Probable occasion, or period, in which the Prophecy was written.	Date B.C.
ISAIAH.			
i. 1	2 Chron. xxvi. 21..	General preface to the prophecies of Isaiah	758
2, to end	2 Chron. xxviii. 19.	{ On the desolate state of Judea on Pe- kah's invasion	740
ii. iii. iv. v. vi.	2 Chron. xxvi. 21...	Designation of Isaiah to the prophetic office	758
vii. viii. ix. x. 1—5	2 Kings xvi. 5	On the invasion of Judea by Rezin and Pekah	742
5 to end—xi. xii. }	Isaiah xxiii. 18.....	{ On the first invasion of Palestine by Sennacherib	715
xiii. xiv. 1—28 ... }			
28, to end	2 Chron. xxviii. 27.	{ On the death of Ahaz and the acces- sion of Hezekiah.....	726
xv. xvi.	2 Chron. xxxi. 21...	{ On the approaching invasion of Moab by Shalmaneser	726
xvii.	Isaiah x. 4.....	Against Damascus on the invasion of Rezin	742
xviii. xix.	2 Kings xviii. 8 ...	{ On the approaching captivity of the ten tribes, and against Egypt	721
xx.	2 Kings xviii. 16 ...	On the capture of Ashdod.....	713
xxi.	Isaiah xxii. 14	{ On the appearance of the Medes and Persians in Sennacherib's army.....	713
xxii. 1—15.....	Isaiah xxvii. 13 ...	{ On the expected appearance of Sen- nacherib's army	713
15, to end ...	2 Kings xxi. 16 ...	On the luxury and pride of Shebna	698
xxiii.	Nahum iii. 19	{ On the exultation of the Tyrians, after the retreat of Shalmaneser	715
xxiv. xxv. xxvi. }	Isaiah xiv. 27	On the desolation of Sennacherib's army...	715
xxvii.			
xxviii.	2 Kings xvi. 9	{ To the ten tribes after the destruction of Damascus.....	740
xxix. xxx. xxxi. ...	Isaiah xx. 6	On Hezekiah's alliance with Egypt	713
xxxii. xxxiii. ... }	2 Kings xx. 11.....	On Hezekiah's recovery	713
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xxxvi. xxxvii.	2 Chron. xxix. 2 ...	History of Sennacherib's invasion	713
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JEREMIAH.			
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6, to end; iv. v. vi.	2 Chron. xxxv. 19..	{ On the backsliding after the reforma- tion by Josiah	612
vii. viii. ix. x.	Habak. iii. 19	On the near approach of the captivity	612
xi. xii.	Jer. x. 25	To remind the people of Josiah's covenant	610
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Prophecy.	After what Scripture.	Probable occasion, or period, in which the Prophecy was written.	Date B.C.
JEREMIAH.			
xxiii.	Jer. xxii. 30	{ On the overthrow of the temporal king- dom of the Jews	599
xxiv.	Jer. lii. 3	On Jehoiachin being carried to Babylon ...	599
xxv.	Jer. xxxv. 19	{ On the immediate approach of Nebu- chadnezzar's army	606
xxvi.	Jer. xxii. 23	Apprehension of Jeremiah	608
xxvii. xxviii.	Jer. xxxi. 40	{ On the approaching ruin of Zedekiah and of the surrounding nations	695
xxix.	Jer. xxiv. 10	{ Letter from Jeremiah to the captives at Babylon	597
xxx. xxxi.	Jer. xxix. 32	Prediction of the restoration of the Jews ...	507
xxxii. xxxiii. ...	Jer. xxxiv. 10	{ Imprisonment of Jeremiah, and pur- chase of the field of Hanameel.	589
xxxiv. 1—11.	Jer. xxxvii. 4	{ On the commencement of the siege of Jerusalem	590
11, to end	Jer. xxxvii. 10	{ On the recal of the Hebrew slaves to their former servitude	589
xxxv.	Jer. xlvii. 12	{ On the Rechabites taking refuge in Jerusalem	606
xxxvi. 1—9	Jer. xxv. 38	First reading of the roll by Baruch	606
9, to end	2 Kings xxiv. 4 ...	Second reading of the roll by Baruch	605
xxxvii. 1—5	Jer. xxxix. 1	Zedekiah sends for Jeremiah	590
5	Jer. xxxiii. 26	{ Part of the narrative of the siege of Jerusalem	589
xxxvii. 6—11 ...	Jer. xlvii. 7	Prediction of the return of Pharaoh's army	589
11, to end	Jer. xxxiv. 22	Jeremiah attempts to escape from Jerusalem	588
xxxviii.	Jer. xxi. 14	{ Jeremiah is committed to the dungeon of Malchiah	588
xxxix. 1.	2 Kings xxv. 22 ...	Commencement of the siege of Jerusalem	590
2.	Jer. lii. 4	Capture of Jerusalem	588
3.	Jer. lii. 6	{ Part of the history of the capture of Jerusalem	588
4—10.	Jer. xxxix. 2	Flight of Zedekiah	588
10.	Jer. lii. 16	{ Account of those who were left in Judea by Nebuzar-adan	588
xxxix. 11—15 ...	Jer. lii. 11	{ Jeremiah committed to the care of Nebuzar-adan	588
15, to end	Jer. xxxviii. 28 ...	The promise to Ebed-melech	588
xl. 1—13.	2 Kings xxv. 2	{ Conduct of Jeremiah after his capture by Nebuzar-adan	588
13. to end—xli. } 1—11	Jer. xl. 12	Conspiracy of Ishmael against Gedaliah ...	588
11, to end	Jer. xli. 10	Johanan rescues the captives from Ishmael	581
xlii. xliii. 1—8 ...	Jer. xli. 18	Jeremiah reproves Johanan	587
8, to end	Jer. xliii. 7	On the arrival of Jeremiah in Egypt	587
xliv.	Jer. xlvi. 28	Predictions of Jeremiah at Tahpanhes	587
xl.	Jer. xxxviii. 8	Address to Baruch on reading the roll	606
xlvi. 1—13.	Jer. xxvi. 24	{ On the defeat of Pharaoh Necho at Carchemish	606
13, to end	Jer. xliii. 13	On the arrival of Jeremiah in Egypt	587
xlvii.	Jer. xxxvii. 5	Before the conquest of Gaza by Pharaoh ...	589
xlvi. xlix.	Jer. xxviii. 17	{ On the ruin of the surrounding nations by Nebuchadnezzar	595
l. li.	Jer. xlix. 30	On Seraiah's going to Babylon	595
lii. 1—4	2 Chron. xxxvi. 10.	Part of the life of Zedekiah	599
4	2 Kings xxiv. 20 ...	{ Nebuchadnezzar commences the siege of Jerusalem	588
5, 6.	Jer. xxxix. 18	Part of the history of the siege of Jerusalem	588
7—12	Jer. xxxix. 3	Part of the history of the siege of Jerusalem	588
12—15	Jer. lii. 27	Burning of the temple of Jerusalem	588
15, 16.	Jer. lii. 23	{ Account of those who were left in Judea by Nebuchadnezzar	588
17—24	Jer. lii. 14	Account of the Jewish spoils	588

Prophecy.	After what Scripture.	Probable occasion, or period, in which the Prophecy was written.	Date B.C.
JEREMIAH.			
lil. 24—28	Jer. xxxix. 14	{ Murder of the chief priests after the capture of Jerusalem	588
— 28—31	Jer. xlv. 30	Recapitulation of the captivities.....	587
— 31, to end	Daniel iv. 37	Release of Jehoiachin	561
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22, to end—iv. } v. vi. vii.	Ezek. iii. 21	Prediction of the destruction of Jerusalem	595
viii. ix. x. xi. 1 } —22	Ezek. vii. 27	{ On the idolatries which occasioned the } { Babylonish captivity	594
22 to end—xii. } xiii. xiv. xv. } xvi. xvii. xviii. } xix.	Ezek. xi. 21	{ On the approaching ruin of Zedekiah } { and the surrounding nations	594
xx. xxi. xxii. xxiii	Ezek. xix. 14	{ On Ezekiel's being consulted by the } { Jewish elders	593
xxiv.	Ezek. xxiii. 49.....	{ On the commencement of the siege of } { Jerusalem	591
xxv. xxvi. xxvii } xxviii.	Ezek. xxxiii. 33 ...	On hearing of the capture of the city.....	587
xxix. 1—17	Ezek. xxiv. 27	{ On Pharaoh's retreat before Nebuchad- } { nezzar.....	589
17, to end—xxx } 1—20	Ezek. xlviii. 35. ...	{ After the siege of Tyre.—Final predic- } { tion against Egypt	572
xxx. 20, to end } —xxxi.	Ezek. xxix. 16.....	{ On Pharaoh's retreat before Nebuchad- } { nezzar.....	588
xxxii. 1—17— } 17, to end	Ezek. xxviii. 26	{ On hearing of the fall of Jerusalem— } { Against Egypt	587
xxxiii. 1—21	Ezek. xxxii. 32	To the captives in Babylon	587
21, to end	Jer. lii. 30	On hearing of the fall of Jerusalem	587
xxxiv. xxxv. } xxxvi. xxxvii. } xxxviii. xxxix. } xl. xli. xlii. xliii. } xliv. xlv. xlvi. } xlvii. xlviii.	Jer. xxxiii. 20	{ Appeal to the heads of the Jewish na- } { tion, after the fall of Jerusalem	587
	Ezek. xxxvii. 28 ...	Prophecy of Gog and Magog.....	587
	Ezek. xxxix. 29 ...	Vision of the future spiritual temple.....	574
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8, to end.....	Lament. v. 22	Condition of Daniel at Babylon	606
ii.	Ezek. xxx. 19	Nebuchadnezzar's first dream	570
iii.	Daniel ii. 49	The golden image set up	570
iv. 1—28.....	Daniel iii. 30.....	Nebuchadnezzar's second dream	569
28, to end	Daniel iv. 27	Madness of Nebuchadnezzar	569
v.	Psalm cxxiii.	Belshazzar's feast	539
vi.	Psalm cii.	Daniel is cast into the den of lions	537
vii.	2 Kings xxv. 30 ...	Daniel's vision of the four living creatures.	541
viii.	Daniel v. 31	Daniel's vision of the ram and the he-goat.	539
ix.	Daniel viii. 27	Prophecy of the seventy weeks	538
x. xi. xii.	Psalm cxxix.	{ On the interruption to the building of } { the second temple	534
HOSEA.			
i. ii. iii.	2 Kings xiv. 27.....	{ On the distress of Israel in the reign } { of Jeroboam the Second.....	801
iv.	2 Kings xiv. 29.	{ On the state of the country during } { the interregnum after the death of } { Jeroboam the Second.....	776
v. vi.	2 Chron. xxviii. 25.	On Ahaz's alliance with Tiglath-pileser ...	739
vii. viii. ix. x. } xi. xii. xiii.	2 Kings xvii. 4.....	On the revolt of Hoshea from Assyria	725

Prophecy.	After what Scripture.	Probable occasion, or period, in which the Prophecy was written.	Date B.C.
JOEL.			
i. ii. iii.	2 Chron. xxvi. 15...	On Uzziah's increasing his army	787
AMOS.			
i. ii. iii. iv. v. } vi. vii. 1—10 }	Hosea iii. 5	In the reign of Jeroboam the Second.....	793
10 to end--viii. ix.	2 Kings xiv. 28.....	{ On being accused of a conspiracy } { against Jeroboam the Second	784
OBADIAH.			
	2 Chron. xxviii. 19.	Against Edom, on their assisting Pekah ...	740
JONAH.			
i. ii. iii. iv.....	Amos vii. 9	{ Soon after the accomplishment of } { Jonah's first prophecy, 2 Kings xiv. 25 }	787
MICAH.			
i. ii.	2 Kings xv. 35	{ On the continuance of idolatry in the } { reign of Jotham	753
iii. iv. v. vi. vii...	Isaiah xvi. 14	{ Written to support the reformation by } { Hezekiah	722
NAHUM.			
i. ii. iii.	Isaiah xix. 25	{ Against Nineveh, immediately after } { the captivity of the ten tribes	720
HABAKKUK.			
i. ii. iii.....	Jeremiah vi. 30 ...	{ On the backsliding after the reforma- } { tion by Josiah	612
ZEPHANIAH.			
i. ii. iii.	1 Chron. xxxiv. 32.	To assist the reformation by Josiah	624
HAGGAI.			
i. 1—12	Ezra v. 1	{ On resuming the building of the second } { temple	520
12, to end }	Ezra v. 2	{ To encourage the builders of the second } { temple	520
ii. 1—10			
10, to end	Zechariah i. 6	Address to the builders of the second temple	520
ZECHARIAH.			
i. 1—7.....	Haggai ii. 9	Exhortation to repentance	520
7, to end }	Haggai ii. 23.....	Address to the builders of the second temple	520
ii. iii. iv. v. vi. }			
vii. viii.	Psalms cxxxviii. ...	To the messengers from Babylon	519
ix. x. xi. xii. }	Ezra x. 44.....	{ Probably about the time of Ezra's refor- } { mation	457
xiii. xiv. }			
MALACHI.			
i. ii. iii. 1—16 ...	Psalms cxix	{ On the corruptions introduced after } { the reformation by Nehemiah.....	433
16, to end—iv.	Nehem. xiii. 31 ...	{ After the completion of the reforma- } { tion by Nehemiah	400

The above Table states after what Scripture the different portions of the prophetic books are to be read in the order of time, but it does not necessarily imply that there is any connexion of subject between the Scripture and the prophecy; as for instance, Mal. i. ii. iii. 1—16, following Psalm cxix. Often, however, there is an important connexion: for instance, 2 Kings xvi. 5, with Isa. vii.—x. 1—5, presents us with an astonishing view of the long-suffering of God to one of the most wicked of men; the prophet Isaiah, for the consolation of Ahaz, was sent not only to assure him of immediate safety, but to announce to him one of the most splendid prophecies in the Old Testament respecting the promised Messiah. (Isa. vii. 14; ix. 6, &c.)

General Questions on the Prophets.

1. Why is this part of the Old Testament distinguished by the name of THE PROPHETS?
2. Which are the greater and which are the minor Prophets?
3. Why are they so called?
4. Which of them prophesied, before, during, and after, the Babylonish captivity?
5. What is their great subject? (1 Pet. i. 10; Rev. xix. 10.)
6. Considering the Prophets as preachers also to their respective generations, what is the scope of their writings? and what the benefits we may derive from them? (See page 275.)
7. Were the people generally obedient to the Prophets, and reformed by their ministry?

Questions adapted to any particular Book of the Prophets.

I. THE WRITER.

1. About what time did he begin, and through what period did he continue to prophesy?
2. If before the Babylonish captivity, what kings of Judah or Israel lived at the same time with him?
3. What parts of the historical books of the Old Testament treat of the period in which he lived?
4. Is any part of his book historical? (See Isaiah xxxvi.—xxxix.)
5. Have we any and what account of his personal history?
6. Is he mentioned in the New Testament?
7. Is there any allusion in this book to the previous history of the Jews, or to any other event recorded in the Old Testament?

Considered in his office as a Preacher.

1. What sins does he notice (see page 279) as committed by (1) Judah, (2) Israel, (3) other nations, (4) any particular individuals?
2. How does he speak of sins against God—as idolatry, neglect of his service, the performance of it in a formal manner, or the disregard of moral duties?
3. With what punishment does he threaten the Jewish people on account of their sins?
4. Does he exhort them to repentance?
5. By what motives?
6. To what other duties does he exhort them?
7. Is there any allusion in this book to false prophets?
8. By what means did they seek to draw the people from the truth, and with what success?

II. FULFILLED PROPHECIES,

arranged under three classes, relating, 1st, to the Jewish nation; 2nd, to other nations, and chiefly those neighbouring to the Jews; 3rd, to the Messiah and his kingdom.

1. Does this book contain any prophecies now fulfilled, relating to the Jewish nation, viz.

- (1.) Concerning the captivity of the ten tribes of Israel?
- (2.) Concerning the kingdom of Judah, its punishments, its captivity in Babylon, &c.?
- (3.) Concerning the nation generally, as the destruction of Jerusalem by the Romans, dispersion of the Jews, &c.?

2. Does this book contain any prophecies now fulfilled, relating to other nations. (1) Nineveh, (2) Babylon, (3) Egypt, (4) Tyre, (5) Ethiopia, (6) Edom, (7) Moab, (8) Philistia, &c.? (See page 295.)

3. Does this book contain any prophecy relating to the Messiah and his kingdom, viz.

- (1.) His person, his Divine, or human nature?
- (2.) His character?
- (3.) His office as prophet, priest, king, &c.?
- (4.) The events of his life, as his birth, ministry, sufferings, death, resurrection, and ascension?
- (5.) His names, as Shepherd, &c., David, &c.?
- (6.) The call of the Gentiles to form part of his kingdom?

4. Compare these different prophecies with each other.

5. Compare them with the event.

6. Does any other prophet speak of the same event?

7. Is there any thing remarkable as to the time when any of these prophecies were delivered? (See pages 239. 286. 303.)

8. What illustration does the New Testament afford of the fulfilment of any of these prophecies? (See page 298.)^q

9. In comparing the prophecies already fulfilled respecting the Jews, other nations, or the Messiah, with their fulfilment, is there any illustration of the improbability at the time the prophecy was delivered of its being fulfilled? (See page 27.)

10. Of its descending to those minute particulars which clearly show it was beyond human forethought or conjecture?

III. UNFULFILLED PROPHECY.

1. What general caution does Sir Isaac Newton give on this subject? (See p. 86.)

2. Is there any prophecy in this book respecting

- (1.) The conversion of the Jews?
- (2.) The universal extension of Christ's kingdom?
- (3.) His second coming to judgment?

3. What effect ought the expectation of these glorious and solemn events to have upon your conduct? (2 Pet. iii. 14.)

^q How unlikely that the Jews, who so ardently expected their Messiah, should reject Him when He came, as foretold, Isaiah liii.; that, being rejected and put to death at their instigation, He should, as foretold, Psalm xxii. 16, die by crucifixion, a punishment not in use among them; that dying the vilest of deaths, He should yet be buried honourably; that all his bones should be out of joint, and yet not one broken; that though He came to confer eternal glory on his disciples, they should all forsake Him in his greatest extremity, as foretold by Zechariah, xiii. 7!

To these, questions more especially applicable to the Prophets, may be added some of those referred to in the Historical Books, as, for instance, those (page 255) relating to the attributes of God. Very sublime views are given by the prophets of the majesty (see Isa. xl. 12—28), the power, the grace (Isa. i. 18 ; xlviii. 13 ; xlix. 15 ; lv. 1—7), and the providence of God.

Many instructive views are presented to us of human nature generally, and illustrated by example, such as Nebuchadnezzar, Jonah, &c.

§ xviii. *History of the Jews in the period between the Old and New Testament.*

In closing this account of the Books of the Old Testament, and before proceeding to those of the New, it seems desirable to give a slight sketch of the history of the Jews during the intermediate period.

The Political History of the Jewish Nation in the interval between the close of the Old Testament and the coming of our Blessed Lord.

This, as gathered principally from the Books of Maccabees and Josephus, may be thus briefly stated. The inspired history leaves the Jews subject to the Persians. When that power was overthrown by Alexander the Great, B.C. 330, they became subject to him, and on his death, to his successors, forming a part of the Egyptian monarchy. During this period many thousands of them were carried into Egypt, and their Scriptures, as has been already remarked, page 5, were translated into the Greek language. After this, the Jews were subject to the Syrian monarchy. During this period they were so violently persecuted by Antiochus Epiphanes (B.C. 168), as to be altogether deprived, for three years and a half, of their civil and religious liberties. (See page 4.) He went so far as to dedicate the temple of Jehovah to Jupiter Olympius, erecting his statue on the altar of burnt-offering, and punishing with death all that could be found acting contrary to his decree : this rousing them to resistance, they were restored to

liberty by the piety and bravery of the family of the Maccabees. These princes continued to flourish with diminished splendour, and in subserviency to the Roman power, till the days of Herod, an Idumæan by birth, but of the Jewish religion, who conquered and deposed the family of the Maccabees, and was appointed king of the Jews by the Romans; under him our Lord Jesus Christ was born, and then, and not till then, was the power of life and death taken away from the Jewish nation.

The Moral History of the Jewish Nation in the interval between the close of the Old Testament and the coming of our Blessed Lord.

This period of four hundred years presents the same illustration of human depravity as their former history had done. A striking effect of the Babylonish captivity was to destroy in them all tendency to idolatry, to which before that event they had always been so prone; but it presented their depravity under a new shape, that of zeal for the form of religion, while they denied its power. Multiplying human traditions, and teaching for doctrines the commandments of men, they made the word of God of none effect: and neglecting the only standard of truth, they were divided into numberless sects, and were filled with contempt of each other, and of the world around them^r. Their very teachers are described by our Lord^s as full of hypocrisy and iniquity; and their doctrines such as rendered those who embraced them twofold more the children of hell than before.

If, with this view of the moral state of the Jews, at the time of our Lord's advent, we connect the account given by Mosheim of the Gentile world^t—that, under every advantage which the wisdom of this world could give, polytheism was increasing among the vulgar, while among the learned, the prevailing systems of philosophy were the Epicurean and the Academic, which struck at the founda-

^r Rom. ii. 17—20.

1 Thess. ii. 15.

Acts xxii. 21, 22.

^s Matt. xxiii.

^t Vol. i. p. 32, &c.

tion of all religion—we may see at what a crisis of the world's state its Redeemer appeared. Who then can doubt the necessity for his coming, or not admire the providence by which the time of it was determined? Nor let us forget the purpose for which He came, and that the great event for which we should be preparing, is his second coming to judgment. Tit. ii. 11—14; 2 Cor. xiii. 5; Luke vi. 47—49; Ps. cxxxix. 23, 24.

CHAPTER V.

THE GOSPELS.

CONTENTS.—§ i. *On the Gospel of St. Matthew.* § ii. *On the Gospel of St. Mark.* § iii. *On the Gospel of St. Luke.* § iv. *On the Gospel of St. John.* § v. *On the Character of our Lord.* § vi. *On the Resurrection of our Lord.* § vii. *The Miracles of our Lord.*

GOSPEL means good tidings; and this name is applied to the first four books of the New Testament, which contain a history, or rather such memoirs as it pleased the Holy Spirit should be recorded, of the life of our Lord Jesus Christ, God manifest in the flesh, the Saviour of the world^a. Hence also the writers, Matthew, Mark, Luke, and John, are called Evangelists, as being the bearers of these good tidings. St. Matthew and St. Luke trace this history from our Lord's conception by the Holy Ghost; St. Mark and St. John begin their accounts with his public appearance at his baptism.

The following consideration will throw great light on the reading of the Gospels—that some things were not made known, or not so clearly made known by our Lord to his disciples, till towards the close of his ministry^b. The importance of this view of his ministry will appear, in its explaining what might otherwise seem to present a difficulty to one just entering on the study of the Bible; namely,

^a Luke ii. 10, 11.

Character of Christ." Chap. v.

^b See Bishop Sumner, "Ministerial The gradual teaching of Christ.

the difference between his mode of teaching and that of his Apostles. The law and the prophets were until John ^c. John said enough to show that he was acquainted with the peculiar object of our Saviour's coming, to take away the sins of the world ^d, &c., but he did not enlarge upon it; he came preaching the baptism of repentance for the remission of sin, and proclaiming this warning,—“the kingdom of heaven is at hand.” Our Lord took up the truth as his forerunner left it, enforcing the same elementary ^e doctrine of repentance, and urging it from the same consideration, “the kingdom of heaven is at hand^f.” Hence in the Sermon on the Mount, our Lord enforces chiefly the spirituality of the moral law, touching very little on the doctrine of the atonement, the great doctrine of revelation, so much and so plainly insisted upon in the Epistles ^g; because just views of the spirituality of the moral law—that it reached to the most secret thoughts, condemning anger without cause as murder, and a wanton look as adultery—were (to those who had so lost sight of this) a necessary preparation for their reception of the doctrine of the atonement. Gal. iii. 24.

Again, because the people were too prejudiced to be instructed more clearly, our Lord spoke to them in parables,—a mode not at all followed by his Apostles,—parables which, in many cases, He left unexplained. For some time our Lord avoided an open disclosure of his character ^h; even forbidding others to declare it. He almost always calls Himself the Son of man ⁱ, and sometimes waives the assertion of his Divinity, as in his conversation with the rich young man. He generally, throughout the earlier part of his ministry, speaks of Himself as not sent

^c Luke xvi. 16.

^f Matt. iii. 2; iv. 17.

^d Isaiah liii.

^g 1 Cor. ii. 2, &c.

Dan. ix. 24, with

^h Matt. xvi. 20.

John i. 29.

Mark iii. 11, 12.

^e Heb. v. 1.

Luke iv. 41.

ⁱ “The title ‘Son of man’ is in all the Gospels found under the peculiar circumstances of its being applied by Christ to Himself, but of never being used of Him, or towards Him, by any other person. It occurs seventeen times in St. Matthew’s Gospel, twelve times in St. Mark, twenty-one times in St. Luke, and eleven times in St. John, and always with this restriction.”—Paley.

but unto the lost sheep of the house of Israel^j; and when sending his disciples to preach^k, He forbids them to go into the way of the Gentiles, though it was one of the distinguishing features of his advent to be “a light to lighten the Gentiles^l.” This, to one just entering on the study of the Bible, might present difficulties, which are removed by the consideration that our Lord was carrying forward the same principle which had characterized the dispensation of mercy from the beginning, that of its gradual development. The doctrine of approaching the mercy-seat of God through Christ as our great High-Priest is one of the most distinguishing features of the Gospel^m; but our Lord seems for the first time to allude to it in the discourse which He held with his Apostles the very night before his crucifixionⁿ: “hitherto have ye asked nothing in my name;” and though in that discourse He explained to them^o more of the mysteries of the Gospel than He had previously done, He adds, “I have yet many things to say unto you, but ye cannot bear them now;” doctrines which (though He had touched upon them) yet even their minds were too prejudiced to receive, which it required his death, resurrection, and ascension to illustrate, and which they would not fully understand, until “He, the Spirit of truth,” had come to “guide them into all truth.” See Matt. xvi. 22; Mark ix. 32; Luke xviii. 34; xxiv. 25; Mark xvi. 14; Acts i. 6. Archbishop Magee remarks, that “until it was clearly established that Jesus was the Messiah, and until by his resurrection, crowning all his miraculous acts, it was made manifest that He who had been crucified by the Jews was *He* who should save them and all mankind from their sins, it must have been premature to explain how this was to be effected.”

To which a remark of Macknight may be added, “that our Lord came from heaven, not so much to make the Gospel revelation, as to be the *subject* of it, by doing and

^j Matt. xv. 24.

^k Matt. x. 5.

^l Luke ii. 32.

Isaiah xlii. 6.

^m Heb. ii. 17.

Rom. viii. 32. 34.

Eph. ii. 4—18.

Heb. iv. 14—16; vii. 23—25;
x. 19. 22; xiii. 15, 16.

1 Pet. ii. 4—6.

1 John ii. 1, 2.

ⁿ John xvi. 24.

^o John xiv.—xvi.

Matt. xxvi. 28.

suffering all that was necessary to procure the salvation of mankind, appointing his Spirit, after his ascension, to be its chief interpreter." And thus we are taught to look to the preaching of the Apostles in the Acts, and to their Epistles (both dictated by that Spirit who is emphatically called the Spirit of Christ^p), for the full view of the Christian dispensation^q.

§ i. *On the Gospel of ST. MATTHEW.*

St. Matthew, surnamed Levi, was a native of Galilee. His occupation was that of a publican, or tax-gatherer, under the Romans at Capernaum. While thus employed in collecting the customs due upon commodities which were carried, and from persons who passed, over the Lake of Gennesareth, he was called by our Lord to be his disciple^r, and under the influence of his grace immediately obeyed. As an illustration of the spirit in which he wrote, Bp. Hall has remarked^s, that in recording the names of the twelve Apostles, he particularly speaks of himself under the opprobrious term of Matthew the *publican*^t, as one anxious to magnify the goodness of God in his election. See page 189.

It is observable, also, that the only notice he takes of the act by which he abandoned every worldly prospect for Christ, is in the following words: "As Jesus passed forth from thence, he saw a man, named Matthew, sitting at the receipt of custom: and he saith unto him, Follow me. And he arose, and followed him^u." He thus presents to us a bright example of humility; and suggests to us the prayer for grace to forsake, as he did, all covetous desires and inordinate love of riches, and follow the same Saviour.—See Collect for St. Matthew's day.

St. Matthew wrote his Gospel in Palestine. It may be thus divided:

Ch. i. ii. treats of the infancy of our Blessed Lord.

Ch. iii. iv. 1—11, records events preparatory to our

^p 1 Pet. i. 11.

^q John xv. 26, 27.

^r Matt. ix. 9.

^s Hall's Contemplations, book iii. cont. iv.

^t Matt. x. 3.

^u Matt. ix. 9.

Lord's public ministry, including the account of the ministry of John the Baptist, his forerunner, and his own baptism and temptation.

Ch. iv. 12,—xx. 16, relates to our Lord's public ministry, particularly in Galilee.

Ch. xx. 17,—xxviii., mentions transactions more immediately connected with his last sufferings, death, and resurrection.

As the Evangelists have many qualities in common, so there is in each that which distinguishes him from the rest. There are two points which distinguish the Gospel of St. Matthew. *The adaptation of his narrative to the Jews, and the distinctness and particularity with which he has related many of our Lord's discourses.*

1. *The adaptation of his narrative to the Jews*, which appears, (1.) In his reference to Jewish customs, cities, and places, as well known by his readers. (2.) In the prominency which he gives to those particulars of our Lord's history which were most likely to convince the Jews that Jesus was the Christ: for instance, "No sentiment relative to the Messiah was more prevalent among them than that He should be of the race of Abraham, and family of David; and accordingly we find that St. Matthew begins his narrative by showing the descent of Jesus from these two illustrious persons. He then relates the birth of Jesus in Bethlehem, the city in which the Messiah was expected to be born; and throughout his Gospel he omits no opportunity of explaining the Scriptures, and of pointing out the fulfilment of prophecy, which was known to have greater weight with the Jews than any other species of evidence. Moreover, he records many of our Saviour's reproofs to the Jews for their errors and superstitions; thus endeavouring to remove from their minds those prejudices which impeded the progress or sullied the purity of the Christian faith."—Tomline.

2. As an illustration of *the distinctness and particularity with which he relates many of our Lord's discourses*, may be mentioned his charge to his Apostles.—Matt. x. with Luke ix. 1—5.

Among the most remarkable things recorded in St. Matthew's Gospel, and not found in any other, are the following:—The visit of the wise men; our Saviour's

flight into Egypt; the slaughter of the infants by Herod; the parable of the ten virgins; the dream of Pilate's wife; the resurrection of many saints, and their appearing unto many immediately after our Saviour's resurrection; and the bribing of the Roman guard appointed to watch the sepulchre. Our Lord's description of the last judgment, as recorded by this Evangelist, demands our special attention^w, in order that, while looking simply to his merits for the remission of sins^x, we may manifest our interest in those merits, by active love to his people^y.

§ ii. *On the Gospel of St. MARK.*

This Evangelist was not, like St. Matthew, one of the twelve Apostles. He was probably nephew to Barnabas^z, and the son of Mary, a pious woman at Jerusalem, at whose house we read^a many were gathered, praying on behalf of St. Peter when cast into prison by Herod. His Hebrew name appears to have been John^b. The further notices of St. Mark in the New Testament are in Acts xiii. 5; Philemon 24; 2 Tim. iv. 11; 1 Pet. v. 13; in which last passage the Apostle calls Mark his son, thus leading us to infer that Peter was the instrument of his conversion. Mark probably wrote his Gospel about the year A.D. 60, when he was residing at Rome with Peter, whose familiar companion he was. In connexion with the fact of his writing under the direction of St. Peter, it is interesting to remark, that many things honourable to that Apostle, and mentioned by the other Evangelists, are omitted by St. Mark, whilst the failings of St. Peter are all recorded in this Gospel. Thus St. Mark does not add the benediction and promise which St. Peter received from our Lord, upon his acknowledging Him to be the Messiah^c; but he relates at large the severe reproof which he received soon after, for not bearing to hear that Christ must suffer^d: and he has fully related Peter's crime of denying our Lord^e.

^w Matt. xxv.

^x Matt. xxvi. 28.

^y Matt. xxv. 40.

^z Col. iv. 10.

^a Acts xii. 12.

^b Acts xv. 37—39.

^c Mark viii. 29, with
Matt. xvi. 17.

^d Mark viii. 33.

^e Mark xiv. 31—71.

It has been already remarked, that St. Matthew in his Gospel more particularly addresses the Jews; and that hence he quotes frequently from the ancient prophets, and alludes to Jewish customs, &c. as well known. St. Mark, on the contrary, writing for the immediate use of Christians at Rome, which was at that time the great metropolis of the world, and common centre of all civilized nations, accommodates himself to every description of persons. Quotations from the ancient prophets, and allusions to Jewish customs, are, in a great measure, avoided: or such explanations are added as might be necessary for Gentile readers at Rome. Thus, when Jordan is first mentioned in this Gospel, the word river is prefixed^f; the oriental word Corban is said to mean a gift^g; the Preparation is said to be the day before the Sabbath^h; defiled, or common hands, are said to mean unwashed handsⁱ; and instead of the word mammon, he uses the term riches. Having mentioned Simon the Cyrenian^j, he adds that he was the father of Alexander and Rufus, because both those persons resided at Rome, and were known to the Roman Christians. Rom. xvi. 13.

St. Mark alludes to most of the events recorded by St. Matthew, though more concisely; as an instance of this conciseness, compare Mark xii. 38—40, with Matt. xxiii. Omitting some things related by St. Matthew, as the genealogy and birth of Christ, and the Sermon on the Mount, he enlarges on some facts mentioned by that Evangelist, such as the cure of the paralytic^k, and the miracle among the Gadarenes^l; and he records two miraculous cures—of the deaf man who had an impediment in his speech^m, and of the blind man at Bethsaidaⁿ—which are not mentioned by any other Evangelist. He alone mentions the parable of the seed growing gradually but insensibly^o; illustrative of the progress of the Gospel in the world. It is to be remarked, also, that he opens

^f Mark i. 5.

^g Mark vii. 11.

^h Mark xv. 42.

ⁱ Mark vii. 2.

^j Mark xv. 21.

^k Mark ii. with Matt. ix.

^l Mark v. 1, with

Matt. viii. 28.

^m Mark vii. 31—37.

ⁿ Mark viii. 22—24.

^o Mark iv. 26—29.

his Gospel by announcing the Saviour to be the Son of God; and records at the close of it the following declaration of that Saviour, "He that believeth and is baptized shall be saved; but he that believeth not shall be damned^p;" which, in the most solemn manner, implies our responsibility for our belief.

§ iii. *On the Gospel of St. LUKE.*

St. Luke is generally supposed to be that beloved physician who is mentioned in Col. iv. 14. He was probably a Gentile proselyte. St. Luke also wrote the Acts of the Apostles^q; and it is inferred from the 11th verse of the xvth chapter of that book that he was a fellow-traveller with St. Paul; for he says, "Loosing from Troas *we* came with a straight course to Samothracia." After St. Paul left Philippi, Luke again uses the third person^r: and he does not resume the first person till St. Paul was in Greece the second time^s. From this period he probably continued with that Apostle till his death; being mentioned in an Epistle written just before St. Paul's death^t. St. Luke's account of the Last Supper remarkably agrees with that given by St. Paul^u. Tertullian and Chrysostom call St. Paul Luke's master and teacher, and Eusebius says he was for the most part a companion of that Apostle.

Though, like St. Mark, he was not an Apostle, nor is once mentioned in the Gospels, yet this does not diminish the credit due to his narrative, because he himself has told us the sources of information to which the Holy Spirit directed him^v. His Gospel was written about A.D. 63 or 64, and, while passing over various particulars mentioned by St. Matthew and St. Mark (who are generally supposed to have written before him), contains many things not mentioned by them, among which are:

Miracles of our Lord.—His raising the widow's son^w;

^p Mark xvi. 16.

^q Acts i. 1.

^r Acts xvii. 1.

^s Acts xx. 5, 6.

^t 2 Tim. iv. 11.

^u Luke xxii. 19, 20, with
1 Cor. xi. 23—25.

^v Luke i. 2.

^w Luke vii.

his healing the deformed woman^x; and his cleansing the ten lepers^y.

Discourses of our Lord.—His first public preaching at Nazareth^z; and his conversation with two disciples going to Emmaus^a.

Parables of our Lord.—The good Samaritan^b; the rich fool^c; the barren fig-tree^d; the prodigal son^e; the unjust steward^f; the rich man and Lazarus^g; the importunate widow; the Pharisee and publican^h.

Events, &c. of our Lord's life.—Many circumstances connected with his birthⁱ; the poverty of his parents, and his being neglected by man, though announced by angels; the return of the spirit of prophecy, as seen in Elisabeth, Mary, Zacharias, Anna, and Simeon; his early piety^k; his obedience to his parents^l; and his compassion to sinners, as seen in his weeping over apostate Jerusalem^m.

Circumstances of his death, &c.—His being sent to Herodⁿ; his prayer for his murderers^o; and his forgiveness of the dying thief^p: by which last act He showed Himself, in the moment of his greatest weakness, able to save to the uttermost all that come unto God by Him, and exercised the prerogative of Deity^q in the very agonies of death.

§ iv. *On the Gospel of ST. JOHN.*

The following references show what the Scriptures record concerning the writer of this Gospel: John xiii. 23—26; xix. 26, 27. 35; xx. 2—10; xxi. 2. 7. 20—25; Matt. iv. 21, 22; x. 2; xx. 20—23; Mark i. 19, 20; v. 37; ix. 2. 38; xiv. 33; Luke ix. 49—56; xxii. 8;

x Luke xiii.

y Luke xvii.

z Luke iv.

a Luke xxiv.

b Luke x.

c Luke xii.

d Luke xiii.

e Luke xv.

f Luke xvi.

g Luke xvi.

h Luke xviii.

i Luke i. ii.

k Luke ii. 40.

l Luke ii. 51.

m Luke xix. 41.

n Luke xxiii. 5—11.

o Luke xxiii. 34.

p Luke xxiii. 43.

q Luke v. 21.

Acts iii. 1—11; iv. 13—20; viii. 14; Gal. ii. 9; Rev. i. 1. 9; xxi. 2.

Not however to omit all notice of one so distinguished, it may be mentioned that he was the son of Zebedee and Salome, and younger brother of James (generally called James the Great), with whom he was brought up as a fisherman, and with whom he was called to be an Apostle. Our Saviour surnamed these two brothers, Boanerges^r, sons of thunder, which title we may understand as a prophetic declaration of the zeal and resolution with which they would hereafter bear testimony to the great truths of the Gospel. They and St. Peter were chosen to accompany our Lord on several occasions, when the other Apostles were not permitted to be present.

But St. John was yet more honoured. He is the only Apostle mentioned as having been present at the crucifixion; and to Him our blessed Lord, just as He was expiring on the cross, gave the strongest proof of his confidence and affection, by consigning to him the care of his mother^s. As he was the witness of our Lord's death^t, so was he the first who believed his resurrection^u. The following remark of Lowth describes the general character of his writings:—"God, who distributes his graces and gifts severally as He pleases, seems to have given John a peculiar insight into the mysteries of the Divine love. He takes a particular pleasure in enlarging upon it, and he treats of it in a plain and inartificial style, but yet with such a lofty eloquence as is above the rules of human art, and can only be ascribed to the influence of that Holy Spirit which gave him utterance."

St. John probably wrote his Gospel about the year 97, *i.e.* more than twenty-five years after the destruction of Jerusalem, and evidently considers those whom he addresses (who were probably Gentiles in Asia Minor) as but little acquainted with the Jewish customs and names^v.

This Evangelist has *omitted* many things recorded by the others; for instance, the birth, baptism, and temptation of our Saviour, several of his parables, discourses, and

^r Mark iii. 17.

^s John xix. 26, &c.

^t John xix. 34, 35.

^u John xx. 8.

^v John i. 38. 41; ii. 6. 13;
iv. 9; xi. 55.

journeyings, and the call of the twelve Apostles; nor does he mention any miracle related by them, except those of feeding the five thousand^w, and walking on the sea.

He has *recorded* many things omitted by the other Evangelists; as John the Baptist directing his disciples to Christ^x; Christ turning water into wine^y; his healing the nobleman's son^z, the infirm man at the pool of Bethesda^a, and the blind man at the pool of Siloam^b; and his raising Lazarus from the dead^c; to which may be added his discourses with Nicodemus^d, with the Samaritan woman^e, with the Pharisees concerning his Divinity^f, at Capernaum concerning Himself as the bread of life^g, and with his disciples on various occasions, particularly on the night preceding his crucifixion^h; his intercessory prayerⁱ; and after his resurrection his appearance to his disciples at the sea of Tiberias, and his restoration of Peter to his apostolic office^k.

Clement of Alexandria calls this a spiritual Gospel, by which he meant that it contains less of historical narrative than any other, and more of doctrine: it gives a fuller development of Christian truth, admirably adapted to confute various heresies respecting the person of our blessed Lord, which had sprung up since the writing of the first three Gospels.

The first eighteen verses of the first chapter are a clue to the intention of the whole Gospel; such discourses and miracles being collected afterwards, as confirm the doctrine there laid down, and prove that Jesus is indeed the Son of God, one with the Father.

These things were written that we "might believe that Jesus is the Christ the Son of God, and that believing we might have life through his name^l." Let the solemn thought sink deep into our hearts, that "he that believeth not the Son shall not see life, but the wrath of God abideth on him^m."

^w John vi.

^x John i.

^y John ii.

^z John iv.

^a John v.

^b John ix.

^c John xi.

^d John iii.

^e John iv.

^f John v.

^g John vi.

^h John xiv.—xvi.

ⁱ John xvii.

^k John xxi.

^l John xx. 31.

^m John iii. 36; see also iii. 3, &c.

This Gospel was probably written the last of all the books of the Bible, and more than fifty years after the Gospel of St. Matthew. In reference to the circumstances which called it forth, it may be remarked, that the various heresies which sprang up in the very first age of Christianity illustrate how God overrules evil for good, as He has thus furnished his Church with adequate instruction and guidance in every subsequent age.

Questions adapted to any Chapter in the Gospels.

1. What are the principal subjects of this chapter?
2. Do you find the same subjects in any of the other Gospels?
3. What do you learn from this chapter respecting the person of Christ—his Divine or his human nature?
4. What doctrines are you here taught to believe?
5. What duties are here enjoined upon you, and from what motives?
6. What promises or threatenings does this chapter contain?
7. In what respect is our Lord here placed before us as an example?
8. Are any other persons mentioned in this chapter?
9. Were they remarkable for excellences or faults?
10. Do you find mention of them in any other parts of Scripture?
11. Is any sin reproved in this chapter?
12. Is any thing good commended?
13. Do you, in any respect, learn from it how and for what you ought to pray?
14. Do you discover here the fulfilment of any prophecy?
15. Is any prophecy delivered in this chapter?
16. Do you find reference to any type, or ceremonial observance of the law?
17. Are you reminded by any part of this chapter of points of history which occur in any other places in the Bible?
18. Is any religious sect introduced? What do you know of that sect?
19. Do you observe a notice of any Eastern custom?
20. What places are here mentioned? Find them out in a map.
21. Do you remember any event which is said to have happened in those places?
22. Does this chapter contain any references to Natural History? to animals, trees, plants, &c.?
23. Is use made of this part of Natural History in any of the figurative language of Scripture?
24. Do you observe any thing which strikes you in the language of any part of this chapter?
25. Are you reminded, by what you here find, of any proverb of Scripture?

26. Does any part of it occur in the services or formularies of the Church?

27. Is any verse of a Psalm or Hymn brought to your recollection while you read any part of this chapter?

28. Is there any thing in this chapter which on reading you did not understand and wished to be explained?

§ v. *On the Character of our Lord.*

A most important subject to which the attention should be directed is, the character of our blessed Lord considered as an example to us. After having read a Gospel, the following questions and suggestions, bearing chiefly on this point, may profitably exercise the minds of the young. They are merely given as specimens; many more might be added.

1. Give some instances of our Lord's attendance on public worship, at the temple, and in the synagogue; his admission to the rites and ceremonies of the Mosaic law (Luke iv. 16; John vii. 37); his retirement for private prayer, and under what circumstances (Matt. xiv. 23; xxvi. 36; Mark i. 35; Luke vi. 12); his prayers for others (Luke xxii. 32, for Peter; John xvii. for his Church; Luke xxiii. 34, for his enemies); his prayer with others (Luke ix. 28).

2. Collect the different prayers of our Lord, and observe their chief subjects, also his directions on the subject of prayer; his acts of praise and thanksgiving, and the occasions, &c. (Matt. xi. 25; Luke xxii. 17; John xi. 41, &c.); and his reference to the Holy Scriptures; as in his temptation, in his discourses with his disciples and with his enemies, and on the cross.

3. Give instances of his submission to the will of his Heavenly Father (John iv. 34; v. 30; xviii. 11); his zeal (John ii. 17; iv. 31—34; Luke ix. 51, &c.); his giving an improving turn to events and circumstances around Him (Matt. ix. 37; Luke xii. 15; John iv. 32; vi. 27; vii. 37); his humility (John viii. 50; xiii. 1, &c.); and his self-denial.

4. Collect the expressions of his tenderness towards his disciples, the multitude, &c. (Matt. ix. 2. 22; Luke xxiii. 28; John xiv.—xvi.); and of his love for his enemies.

5. Give illustrations how our Lord acted as a son (Luke ii. 51; John xix. 26); as a master; as a friend (John xi.); as a subject (Matt. xxii. 21); as a teacher (Matt. xi. 29).

6. Give instances of his reproof, and show the grounds of it in the following cases: (his Apostles, as Peter, Matt. xvi. 23; Luke xxii. 61; John xxi.; James and John, Luke ix. 55; Thomas, John xx. 27; Judas, John xii. 7, 8; other disciples, Luke xxiv. 25.) What sins seemed to call forth his severest reproof (John viii. 44; Matt. xxiii.)?

7. What does our Lord say of unbelief (Matt. xi. 21—24; John iii. 36)? of anger, covetousness, and other vices; and of particular virtues, as

meekness, &c.? Give instances in which our Lord made people reprove themselves. (Mark xii. 16, &c.; John iv. 16, &c.)

8. Who were particularly the objects of our Lord's commendation? and for what (Matt. viii. 10; xv. 28; xxvi. 13; Luke x. 42; xxi. 3)?

9. Under what circumstances did our Lord receive honour and praise from God or man (Luke iii. 22; iv. 22; Mark i. 28; vii. 37)?

10. When did our Lord give offence, and what occasioned it (Mark vi. 3; John vi. 66; xix. 7)?

11. What charges were brought against our Lord? By what opprobrious names was He called? Collect the different reasons which were given by different individuals for not following, or for rejecting Him, as his low origin, &c. (Mark vi. 3; x. 22; John vii. 41.)

12. What reasons does our Lord give why He was rejected (John vii. 7)?

13. Give instances of our Lord's command of temper under circumstances calculated greatly to irritate it (Matt. xxvii. 14; Luke xxii.; John xiii.); and of his condescension to the infirmities of others (John xx. 27; Matt. xxvi. 41).

14. Under what circumstances did our Lord turn away from those who applied to Him, or refused to comply with their requests (Mark viii. 11, 12; x. 35, &c.; Luke xxiii. 8), or seem to check their coming (Matt. viii. 19, 20; Mark v. 19; Luke xiv. 25, &c.)?

15. Mention some of the occasions on which our Lord wrought his miracles. When did He perform a miracle though not asked (John ii. 5; ix. 1; Luke xxii. 51)? Give instances in which He required faith as a condition (Matt. ix. 29). Did He perform any miracle at the intercession of others (Matt. ix. 2, &c.)?

16. What questions were asked of our Lord? What rich people came to Him, and poor, and learned, and Gentiles? Did any fathers or mothers come to Him on behalf of their children, any masters, brothers, &c.? What questions did our Lord ask?

17. What views had the prophets given of our Lord's character, and what illustrations does his conduct afford of those views (Isa. xi. 1—9; xlii. 1—4; l. 4; liii. lxi.)?

18. Isa. lii. 13, speaks of his dealing prudently. Observe his prudence in declining all interference with civil affairs (Luke xii. 13; John vi. 15); and in the use of means for the preservation of his life (Matt. iv. 12; Mark iii. 6, 7; John vii. 1—10; x. 39; xi. 53, 54); as also his wisdom in suiting his instructions to his hearers (John xvi. 12).

19. Show our Lord's respect for the distinctions of civil life, authority of rulers, &c. (Luke xiv. 7; xvii. 7; Mark xii. 17.)

20. What does our Lord say, as to the great principle which influenced Him in all He did (John iv. 34); also as to his object in coming into the world (Matt. xx. 28; Luke xix. 10; John ix. 39; x. 10; xviii. 37)? By what titles does He speak of Himself? What does He promise to those who become his disciples (John x. 11. 28)?

21. How does He describe the character of such (Matt. v.)? To what extent does He require they should love Him? In what terms does He assert his divinity (John v. 23)? How does He describe the office of the Holy Spirit (John xiv.—xvi.)?

22. How does our Lord describe a future state of happiness and of misery? How does He describe his second coming?

The following remarks on the miracles of our Lord, as illustrative of his character, will in some measure show the use to be made of the above questions.

Our Lord's miracles illustrate (1) his *devotional spirit*.—Thus (John xi. 41) He accompanied the miracle with prayer, and (John vi. 11) with giving of thanks. That his miracles, his acts of love to man, were not suffered to interfere with his practice of private devotion, is seen Mark i. 34, 35. After sunset, at the close of a day of labour, multitudes are brought to Him and healed; none are turned away; but his own rest is sacrificed: rising up a great while before day, He went out and departed into a solitary place, and there prayed.

(2) *His self-denial, and submission to the will of his Heavenly Father*.—He wrought no miracle till He was thirty years of age, and none afterwards to promote his own ease and comfort. The intention of those He wrought for the preservation of his own life, was that He might reserve Himself for that to which He often distinctly alluded (Matt. xvi. 21; xx. 19, &c.)—the sacrifice of Himself in the agony of the cross. Neither extreme hunger in the wilderness (Matt. iv. 2), nor intense suffering in the garden of Gethsemane, and on the cross, could drive Him to work a miracle for his relief, when the glory of God would not be promoted by it, though legions of angels waited his command (Matt. xxvi. 53). It must have been very painful to our Lord's natural feelings to wound those of Martha and Mary, by suffering Lazarus to die (John xi. 6). But He would show us, that whatever be our power to help our friends, or inclination to do so, we must be guided in the exercise of that power by a regard to the glory of God (John xi. 4), and to their spiritual welfare, rather than to the gratification of their present feelings.

(3) *The activity of his life to man*.—He went about doing good, healing, &c. (Acts x. 38), seeking out opportunities (Matt. iv. 23).—He was found of them who sought Him not (John v. 6), as by the man at the pool of Bethesda. Nor was our Lord ever induced, by the discouraging conduct of others, to neglect, or defer, an exercise of mercy. Thus (Mark v. 40) they laughed Him to scorn, but He took the damsel by the hand, and raised her from the dead.—Matt. xx. 31, the multitude rebuked the blind men, but our Lord healed them.—John viii. 59; ix. 1, they took up stones to cast at Him, but though, as it were, escaping for his life, yet as He passed by He healed a man born blind, *stopping*, and with some deliberation anointing his eyes.—Matt. xii. 14, the Pharisees held a council how they might destroy Him: our Lord withdrew, but not to cease to labour; great multitudes followed Him, and He healed them all.—Mark vi. 31, our Lord had gone into a desert place, apart, wishing for retirement, but a heedless multitude brake in upon Him, and He comes forth, instructs, and then miraculously feeds them (34—44).

(4) *The tenderness of his love*.—Mark vii. 34, He sighed, &c. John xi. 35, He wept. Matt. ix. 2. 22, *Son*, be of good cheer. *Daughter*, be of good comfort. Our Lord's consideration is seen in Luke vii. 15; He delivered the young man to his mother, though He might have required him as an attendant. His condescension is seen in Matt. viii. 7, "I will come and heal him;" *i. e.* the servant of a Gentile.

In healing the leper (Matt. viii. 3) our Lord disdained not to touch him. Thus did He weep with them that wept, and condescended to men of low estate.

(5) *The expansiveness of his love.*—The Syro-Phœnician; a Canaanite (Matt. xv. 22); the Samaritan (Luke xvii. 16); the servant of a Gentile soldier garrisoned at Capernaum, to keep the Jews in subjection; those who applied to Him with wrong feelings, Luke xvii. 11—19; his very enemies, when exercising violence against Him, as Malchus (Luke xxii. 51), the servant of the High Priest—all felt the merciful effects of that heavenly love. Thus does He teach us to love mankind, and overcome evil with good.

(6) *His wisdom and prudence.*—Our Lord wrought a miracle (Matt. xiv. 29) to support Peter on the water, and then allowed him to sink, to check that self-confidence which threatened his ruin (Luke xxii. 33). His ordering the fragments to be gathered up (John vi. 12) teaches us that command over abundance does not justify waste; and compared with Mark vi. 39, instructs us in the duty of order as well as economy. The demoniac restored to his right mind (Mark v. 18) prayed our Lord that he might be with Him: but our Lord says, "Go home to thy friends, and tell how great things the Lord hath done for thee." The inhabitants of the country where the demoniac lived had besought our Lord to depart out of their coasts; but his wisdom and mercy alike appear, in his leaving this memorial of his grace among them, to bring them to repentance. In many of our Lord's miracles, He made use of the co-operation of human agency. Thus (Luke v. 4) He bade his disciples let down their nets for a draught. To the man with a withered hand (Matt. xii. 13) He said, "Stretch forth thine hand:" and with his attempt was given by our Lord the power. Matt. xiv. 19, &c. through the medium of the Apostles He fed the multitude. To the ten lepers (Luke xvii. 14) He said, "Go show yourselves to the priests:" and as they went they were cleansed. Before raising Lazarus our Lord bade them roll away the stone, John xi. 39. Our Lord's miracles never fostered indolence, but qualified those who were the subjects of them for the discharge of the duties of life; none were ever raised by them above the station in which Providence placed them. This suggests to us, that whatever be our means, the wisest charity is that which helps people to assist themselves. The miracle of paying tribute, by a piece of money found in the mouth of a fish, showed our Lord's command over all the treasures of the deep; yet, more was not provided than was adequate to the present necessity: the motive of working this miracle was to avoid giving needless offence; suggesting a most important lesson to us, and illustrating the advice of the Apostle,—“If it be possible, as much as lieth in you, live peaceably with all men.” When dying, our blessed Lord wrought no miracle for the support of his aged and widowed mother, because the end could be better accomplished by ordinary means, though at the very moment He showed his Divine power in the pardon of the dying thief. When there was determined unbelief, our Lord acted by the rule, not to cast pearls before swine (Mark viii. 11, 12). The Pharisees (Mark viii. 23—26, with Matt. xi. 21), Bethsaida (Luke iv.), Nazareth (where our Lord wrought no miracles, because its inhabitants had had the evidence of his character, as having lived thirty

years among them), and Herod (Luke xxiii. 8), are instances of this. He wrought very few miracles at Jerusalem in the earlier part of his ministry, and the wisdom and prudence of this appear in the effect produced at its close by the raising of Lazarus (John xi. 47), which makes it evident, that not to have acted so, would, humanly speaking, have hastened his crucifixion before his ministry was accomplished.

It thus appears, that in the principles on which our Lord acted in the exercise even of his miracles, there is much for our imitation.

The importance of making use of the character of our Lord as an example to ourselves, is strongly urged in Scriptureⁿ. It is also beautifully alluded to in the baptismal service of the Church of England, as the very principle on which the education of her members should, from their earliest years, be conducted. See Exhortation to Godfathers and Godmothers, particularly the part beginning, "Remembering always, that Baptism doth represent unto us our profession, which is to follow the example of our Saviour Christ," &c.

§ vi. *The Resurrection of our Lord.*

The resurrection of our Lord is the foundation of Christianity. On it the writers of the New Testament chiefly rest his claim to be the Son of God^o, and consequently their own claim to inspiration; for if He were not risen, then was their preaching vain^p. Some notice, therefore, of the evidence by which it is established may be here taken: though little more can be done than to recommend some of the works of those who have written professedly on it.

I. West has entered fully into the question, admirably harmonizing the different accounts of the four Evangelists.

II. Bishop Sherlock has thrown the evidence for the resurrection of our Lord into the very interesting form of a supposed trial in a court of justice. Witnesses are examined, counsel heard, the judge sums up, the jury give their verdict.

III. Others have dwelt on the results of the Apostles' preaching this fact of the resurrection of our Lord on the very spot where it happened, immediately after the occurrence, and before the very men who had procured his cru-

ⁿ 1 Pet. ii. 21.

Rom. viii. 29; xv. 2, 3.

Phil. ii. 5. 1 John ii. 6; iii. 2.

^o Rom. i. 4.

^p 1 Cor. xv. 14.

cifixion, to whom his body was committed, and who were aware that He said He should rise again^q. On the first appeal of the Apostles, three thousand persons, many of whom had assisted in the crucifixion of our Lord^r, became his disciples, thus giving fresh proof of the power of his resurrection: and in a few years many thousands more^s, in defiance of the severest persecution, attested the same great truth.

IV. Lord Lyttelton has shown that the conversion of St. Paul is in itself an unanswerable proof of our Lord's resurrection.

V. But out of the many proofs of which the subject admits, and which have been often urged, one of the most striking is the alteration in the state of mind and conduct of the Apostles. Even before his crucifixion they all forsook their Lord, and fled; and so abandoned were they almost to despair, so hardened were their hearts by unbelief, that though their own prophets had foretold that Christ should rise again from the dead, though He had often asserted it Himself^t, yet they would not believe it: and when certain women of their own company declared "that they had also seen a vision of angels which said that he was alive^u," "their words seemed to them as idle tales, and they believed them not^v."

With this state of mind contrast their conduct as recorded in the Acts of the Apostles^w: mark the resolution with which they testified to the resurrection of their Lord: and observe the glow of holy joy, which, in the midst of their bitterest sufferings, showed them to be more than conquerors^x. Read the Epistles of St. Peter, who had denied his Master with oaths and cursing, who knew that, if Christianity was true, he should die by crucifixion^y; and then ask yourself, Whence could he have attained such ability, such feelings, such hopes, but as he had been begotten again to them, "by the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead?" 1 Pet. i. 3.

^q Matt. xxvii. 62, 63.

^r Acts ii. 36.

^s Acts xxi. 20.

^t John ii. 19. 21; x. 17.

Mark x. 34. Luke ix. 22.

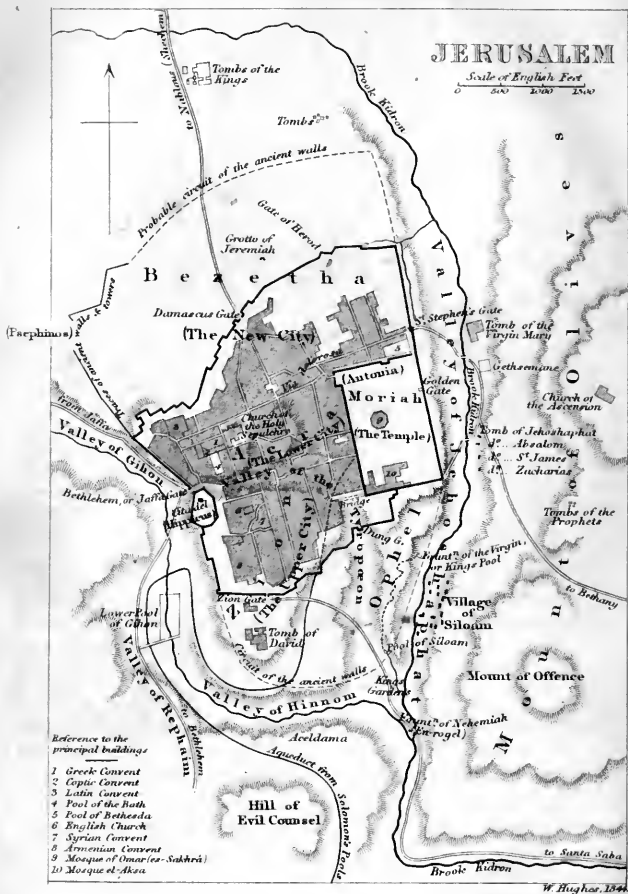
^u Luke xxiv. 23.

^v Luke xxiv. 11.

^w Acts iv. 13, &c.

^x Acts v. 41.

^y John xxi. 18, 19.



CHAPTER VI.

THE ACTS OF THE APOSTLES.

LUKE has been already referred to as the writer of this book; and his humility appears in this fact, that while attending St. Paul in various scenes referred to in the Acts, he never mentions any thing in the course of his narrative reflecting credit on himself, though he is always spoken of by Paul in his Epistles with commendation.—Col. iv. 14; 2 Tim. iv. 11: see Prov. xxvii. 2.

The Gospels close with a prophetic allusion to several facts recorded in the Acts, and with a promise of the Holy Spirit, of which this book gives the fulfilment.—Luke xxiv. 47—49; Mark xvi. 17, 18; John xiv. 12—17.

The Epistles also plainly suppose that those facts had actually occurred which this history relates. Hence appears the importance of the Acts, as a kind of postscript to the Gospels, and as an introduction to the Epistles, to the study of which it forms a most useful guide.—See Paley's *Horæ Paulinæ*; also pages 65. 342.

As the Gospels are far from being a complete history of all our blessed Lord said and did, but are rather memoirs illustrating his person and office, in connexion with the *rise* of the Christian dispensation, of which He is the great subject^a; so the book of the Acts of the Apostles is far from being a complete history of his Apostles, but is rather a narrative of such facts as illustrate the *establishment* of that dispensation: it dwells therefore most largely upon that particular feature which distinguished it from Judaism, and against which the greatest opposition was made, the preaching “among the *Gentiles* the unsearchable riches of Christ.”—Eph. iii. 8.

These remarks suggest the following division of its contents:

Ch. i. ii. point to the great foundation of Christianity, the resurrection and ascension of Christ, and the descent of the Holy Spirit; facts to which alone its progress in the world can be attributed, and on which alone the hope of its final triumph can rest.

^a Dan. ix. 24. 2 Cor. i. 20. 1 John v. 11.

Ch. ii.—ix. contain an account of the spreading of Christianity *among the Jews*, from A.D. 33—40.

Ch. x.—xii. contain an account of the spreading of Christianity *among the DEVOUT Gentiles*; that is, among those Gentiles who, like Cornelius, had before worshipped the one true God; together with its further progress among the Jews, A.D. 40—45.

Ch. xii.—xxviii. contain an account of the spreading of Christianity among the IDOLATROUS *Gentiles*, together with its further progress among the Jews and Gentile proselytes, A.D. 44—62.

A comparison of this book with the Epistles will throw great light on a subject of the deepest practical importance, namely, the conduct of the first Christians. With their character, so brightly exhibiting the genuine fruits of Christianity, we may compare our own, that we may all be ashamed of our iniquities, and our deviation from such a standard.

The Divinity and offices of the Son and Holy Spirit appear with great clearness in this book.

The *Divine nature of the Son*, our Lord Jesus Christ, appears in that He was made the object of Divine worship by Stephen^b. Prayer to Christ is spoken of as necessary to salvation^c. Ananias speaks of prayer to Christ as a distinguishing mark of being a Christian^d. Peter speaks of Jesus Christ as Lord of all^e. Compare also xiv. 23; xx. 32; also xx. 28. It is very observable, that the term “Lord,” as applying indiscriminately to God the Father and God the Son, constantly occurs throughout this book. (See ch. x. 36; ix. 34, 35. 42; xi. 16. 20, 21. 23; and xiii. 2. 7. 10—12. 48.)

The *Divine nature of the Holy Ghost* is also clearly stated. Compare the third and fourth verses of chap. v., where the Holy Ghost is called God. The awful punishment of Ananias was for conduct which implied a denial of his omniscience. He whom Paul^f speaks of as the Holy Ghost, Isaiah^g declares to be the Lord. Illustrations of the personality of the Holy Ghost occur in ch. viii. 20; x. 19; xiii. 2; xvi. 7; xx. 28.

To see the reference in this book to the *office* of the Son,

^b Acts vii. 59, 60.

^c Acts ii. 21.

^d Acts ix. 14, with 1 Cor. i. 1, 2.

^e Acts x. 36.

^f Acts xxviii. 25.

^g Isaiah vi. 8, 9.

read it over with this immediate view, noting down the principal passages bearing upon the subject.

The first general truth which will present itself is, that Jesus Christ is the great subject of the Apostles' preaching, as having fulfilled "the promise made to the fathers ^h." Thus ⁱ, daily in the temple, and in every house, they ceased not to teach and preach Jesus Christ.

Every where Jesus Christ is the subject of St. Paul's ministry. He began with it at his conversion: "straightway he preached *Christ* ^k." Twenty-eight years afterwards, the last record the book contains of him ^l is, that "he preached and taught those things which concern the Lord Jesus:" thus faithfully fulfilling the great purpose for which he had been chosen, to bear his name before the Gentiles, and kings, and the children of Israel ^m.

Descending to the particulars of the office of Christ, we see that they preached Jesus as a Saviour ⁿ; that we are to look to Him for remission of sin ^o, for our full justification before God ^p, and for a resurrection to eternal life; that these blessings are purchased to us by his sufferings ^q (as predicted by the prophets), and particularly by his death ^r, the Church being purchased by his blood.

It is to be remembered, that in the Acts we have only a few discourses of the Apostles, the subject-matter of which is more fully explained in the Epistles; but referring to Isa. liii. (by which Philip preached Jesus to the Ethiopian), we learn that justification is ascribed to belief in Christ (see verse 11), that He "was wounded for our transgressions," that "the Lord laid on him the iniquity of us all, making his soul an offering for sin;" and that as He "bare the sin of many," so He "makes intercession for the transgressors."

The benevolent and pious Cornelius is a striking instance of the need all have of the knowledge of Christ. Devout as he was, it was necessary that he should be brought to Peter, to hear words whereby he might be saved ^s. Observe

^h Acts iii. 24; xiii. 32; xxvi. 6.

ⁱ Acts v. 42.

^k Acts ix. 20.

^l Acts xxviii. 31.

^m Acts ix. 15.

ⁿ Acts xiii. 23.

^o Acts ii. 38; iii. 19.

^p Acts xiii. 39.

^q Acts xvii. 3; xxvi. 23.

^r Acts xx. 28.

^s Acts xi. 14.

also the great topics on which St. Peter dwelt^t, viz. peace through Jesus Christ, his life, death, resurrection, &c., and the witness of all the prophets to the great doctrine of remission of sins, through faith in his name^u.

We further learn, that salvation is bestowed on those only who believe in Christ^v, that it consists in deliverance from the power as well as the guilt of sin^w, and that Christ is exalted as a Prince and a Saviour to give repentance^x and the Holy Spirit (i. 4; ii. 33, compared with Eph. iv. 8).

The office the Son had yet to sustain, as the appointed Judge of mankind, by which his great work as Mediator will be consummated, is again and again referred to in this book.—Ch. iii. 21; x. 42; xvii. 31.

The *office of the Holy Ghost* may be illustrated in the same way; a distinction being made between his miraculous and ordinary influences; the latter of which it more immediately concerns us to observe.

We may notice, on the day of Pentecost, the Holy Spirit convincing of sin through the preaching of a crucified and risen Saviour (ii. 36, 37, compared with John xvi. 8); thus leading the very murderers of our Lord to the entire surrender of themselves to his service.

His enlightening the understanding, as the teacher of those already converted, appears in the alteration produced on the minds of the Apostles. Even when our Lord ascended, they still clung to the hope of a temporal kingdom^y; but never after the descent of the Spirit on that day did this delusion affect them^z. So in the dispositions of the Christians at Jerusalem, who are said to have been filled with the Holy Ghost^a, is illustrated the office of the Holy Ghost as the *Sanctifier and Comforter*. Their liberty from the fear of man, their union^b, diligence in spreading the Gospel^c, liberality^d, spirit of prayer, love for God's ordinances^e, and joy in Christ amid the severest sufferings for his name, were all the fruit of the Spirit. See Gal. v. 22, compared with the facts recorded in the Acts. Stephen's wisdom in argument, his love for his enemies, his zeal for God's glory, his peace

^t Acts x. 36, &c.

^u Acts x. 43.

^v Acts iv. 11, 12.

^w Acts iii. 26; xxvi. 18.

^x Acts v. 31.

^y Acts i. 6.

^z Luke xxiv. 51—53. 1 Pet. i. 4.

^a Acts ii. 4; iv. 31.

^b Acts iv. 32.

^c Acts viii. 5.

^d Acts iv. 34; ii. 45.

^e Acts ii. 41, &c.

in death, were derived from his being "full of the Holy Ghost^f." In Barnabas, the son of consolation, we find another disciple "full of the Holy Ghost^g." The happiness enjoyed by the Samaritans^h, the Ethiopian eunuchⁱ, the Church at Antioch^k, Paul and Silas in prison^l, and the Philippian jailor on his conversion^m, arose from the same source, the sanctifying and comforting influences of the Holy Spirit. Every instance of true conversion in this book is an illustration of the office of the Holy Spirit; whose great work is to apply to each soul the blessings of redemption, which the Son, by his obedience unto death, has purchased. This book is the history of the early triumphs of Christianity—of the triumphs of that dispensation which is distinguished as the ministration of the Spiritⁿ. Remembering the great encouragement our Lord has given us to seek the influence of the Holy Spirit^o, and the blessings to which we have been called by baptism, let it be our prayer that we may daily increase in the manifold gifts of his grace, proving that ours is a *faith which worketh by love*.—See Confirmation Service of the Church of England.

CHAPTER VII.

THE EPISTLES.

CONTENTS.—§ i. *General Remarks on the Epistles.* § ii. *On the Epistles of St. Paul.* § iii. *On the Epistle to the Romans.* § iv. *On the first Epistle to the Corinthians.* § v. *On the second Epistle to the Corinthians.* § vi. *On the Epistle to the Galatians.* § vii. *On the Epistle to the Ephesians.* § viii. *On the Epistle to the Philippians.* § ix. *On the Epistle to the Colossians.* § x. *On the first Epistle to the Thessalonians.* § xi. *On the second Epistle to the Thessalonians.* § xii. *On the first Epistle to Timothy.* § xiii. *On the second Epistle to Timothy.* § xiv. *On the Epistle to Titus.* § xv. *On the Epistle to Philemon.* § xvi. *On the Epistle to the Hebrews.* § xvii. *On the seven Catholic Epistles.* § xviii. *On the Epistle of James.* § xix. *On the first Epistle of Peter.* § xx. *On*

^f Acts vii. 55.

^g Acts xi. 24.

^h Acts viii. 8.

ⁱ Acts viii. 39.

^k Acts xiii. 52.

^l Acts xvi. 25.

^m Acts xvi. 34.

ⁿ 2 Cor. iii. 8.

^o Luke xi. 13.

the second Epistle of Peter. § xxi. *On the first Epistle of John.* § xxii. *On the second Epistle of John.* § xxiii. *On the third Epistle of John.* § xxiv. *On the Epistle of Jude.*

§ i. *General Remarks on the Epistles.*

The Epistles contained in the New Testament are twenty-one in number; of which fourteen were written by St. Paul, three by St. John, two by St. Peter, and one each by St. James and St. Jude.

The practical improvement peculiarly to be derived from the Epistles has been already suggested, page 66.

They present us with enlarged views of (1) *The Attributes of God*; of God the Father, God the Son, and God the Holy Ghost. (2) *The character, condition, and duties of man*; being particularly copious in precepts, explaining and enforcing our duty to our fellow-creatures in every relation in which we stand to them, as princes and subjects^a, pastors and people^b, husbands and wives^c, parents and children^d, masters and servants^e. (3) *The great work of man's redemption* *. The Epistles contain the complete development of those "many things" which, before our Lord's death, his Apostles were "not able to bear"; as, for instance, the spiritual nature of his kingdom; the doctrine of his dying for our sins, and rising again for our justification; and the call of the Gentiles, to make one and the same Church with the Jews, by the abolition of the ceremonial law. They particularly instruct us on the person and office of the Son as our Mediator, and of the Holy Spirit as our Sanctifier; and they urge these relations as

^a Rom. xiii.

1 Pet. ii. 13.

^b 1 & 2 Tim.

Titus.

1 Thess. v. 12, 13.

Heb. xiii. 7—17.

^c Eph. v. 22—33.

Col. iii. 18.

1 Pet. iii. 1.

^d Eph. vi.

1 Tim. v. 4.

Tit. ii. 4.

^e Eph. vi. 5.

Col. iii. 22; iv. 1.

Tit. ii. 9, 10.

1 Pet. ii. 18.

^f John xvi. 12.

* "The apostolical writings have this particular advantage, that they are a *Divine and infallible commentary*, or an *authentic explication* of Christ's words in the Gospels, wherein the fundamentals of Christianity are admirably illustrated, and the mysterious parts of our holy faith more fully opened and explained than they were by Christ Himself."—Lowth.

a motive not only to the performance of our duties to these Divine Persons, by showing them all "reverence, honour, love, trust, gratitude, fear, hope;" but also to the discharge of our duties to our fellow-creatures—a subject already partially illustrated (p. 76). See Butler's Analogy, Part II. chap. i. p. 211; where he shows in what sense the essence of revealed religion consists in religious regards to the Son and Holy Ghost.

Two general remarks may be made as a clue to our understanding the Epistles, and they are here introduced, because in this little work, which is meant to be only a first step to the Bible, it will not be possible to enter largely into the contents of each Epistle.

I. The first general remark regards the *nature of the writings*.

It has seemed fit to the infinite wisdom of the Holy Spirit, in this portion of his word, to instruct mankind—not in the form of regular treatises, but in letters, written indeed under his guidance, but often at the spur of the moment, and with immediate reference to the circumstances of those who were particularly addressed. A knowledge of those circumstances, therefore, as gathered chiefly from the Epistle itself, must be acquired, to obtain a just view of its scope. For this purpose the plan recommended by Locke should be adopted by all who would attain a comprehensive view of truth. The plan of Mr. Locke was as follows—to read the whole Epistle through at a sitting, and to observe, as well as he could, the drift and design of the writer. "If the first reading (he says) gave me some light, the second gave me more: and so I persisted on, reading constantly the whole Epistle over at once, till I came to have a good general view of the Apostle's main purpose in writing the Epistle; the chief branches of his discourse, wherein he prosecuted it; the arguments he used: and the disposition of the whole. This, I confess, is not to be obtained by one or two hasty readings; it must be repeated again and again, with a close attention to the tenor of the discourse, and a perfect neglect of the divisions into chapters and verses. The safest way is to suppose the Epistle has but one business and one aim, until, by a frequent perusal of it, you are forced to see

there are distinct independent matters in it, which will forwardly enough show themselves."

II. The second general remark refers to *some prevailing errors of the times*, which distracted the Christian Church.

1. One error arose from the very great difficulty which the converted Jews had in believing that the Mosaic dispensation, so clearly founded by Divine authority, and especially the rite of circumcision, which from the very time of Abraham had been so solemnly enforced as generally necessary to salvation^g, were no longer binding on all who hoped for acceptance with God; and that the Gentiles were admitted by the Gospel to equal privileges with themselves. The following passages, among many others which might have been taken, show the importance of attending to this as a prevailing error of the times: Acts xv. 1, "Except ye be circumcised after the manner of Moses, ye cannot be saved;" implying that salvation could be obtained no where but in the Jewish Church. See also 2 Cor. xi. 3; Gal. ii. 4; v. 1. 10—12; vi. 12; Phil. iii. 2; Col. ii. 4. 8. 16; Tit. i. 10, 11. 14, &c. In fact, almost all of St. Paul's Epistles have some allusion to it.

2. Another source of error was the *philosophy of the Greeks*, of which Burton remarks, that it became more fatal to the souls of men than the sword of persecution. Men previously educated in the vain deceits of man's wisdom, and puffed up with the sufficiency of human reason, endeavoured to force Christianity into a conformity with their various systems and opinions. Allusions are made to this in 1 Tim. vi. 20; Tit. iii. 9; Col. ii. 8. The two principal subjects on which they speculated were, the origin of evil, and the person of Christ. Simon Magus was probably the first person who mixed these notions with the system of Christianity; and the general name given to his followers was that of Gnostics, from a Greek word signifying knowledge, on account of the superior knowledge of God to which they laid claim. They were subdivided into many sects.

(1) Some (called Docetæ), because they could not comprehend how a Divine Person (which they did not doubt our Lord to be) could really unite Himself with that which was human, contended that his body was only a body in appear-

^g Gen. xvii. 14.

ance, and that He only *seemed* to suffer and die; a heresy which involved the denial of the Atonement. This is referred to in 1 John iv. 2, 3.

(2) Others (called Cerinthians from Cerinthus their founder), upon the same principle of not believing what they could not comprehend, came to an opposite conclusion as to the person of Jesus. They had no doubt of his human nature, or that He had really done all that was recorded of Him in the Gospels; but then they could not reconcile the things which happened to Him with their idea of the Son of God; and therefore they denied his Divinity, supposing that Christ, whom they considered an emanation from the Godhead, descended upon the man Jesus at his baptism, and so continued with Him till his crucifixion, when Christ left Him and returned to heaven.—1 John ii. 22; iv. 15: i. 1, 2.

These opposite conclusions from the same principle, of making our reason the standard of revelation, show the inability of man to teach himself religion^h, and the folly of seeking to bring down God's mysteries to the level of man's understanding, instead of raising men's faith to an humble reception of God's mysteriesⁱ. Lord Bacon says "He laboureth in vain who shall endeavour to draw down heavenly mysteries to human reason; it rather becomes us to bring our reason to the adorable throne of Divine truth^j."

(3) The Ebionites differed little in their views of Christ from the Cerinthians, except that they adhered to the Mosaic law. They rejected part of Scripture, and thus destroyed the harmony of the whole—unwilling to receive "the truth as it is in Jesus."

(4) Others, again (called Nicolaitans, and who are expressly mentioned in the Revelation of St. John), asserted, that whoever possessed the knowledge of God and of Christ, was sure of salvation, whatever his character might be.—They affirmed that Christ had purchased for his people an absolute freedom from the law, even as a rule of life, so that they were incapable of sinning, and therefore not subject to punishment. See Rev. ii. 6. 15; 1 John i. 8. 10;

^h 1 Cor. ii. 14.

ⁱ Job xi. 7.

^j "The highest perfection of human reason is to know there is an infinity of truth beyond its reach."—Pascal.

ii. 1. 3 ; iii. 4. They were ever ready to comply with heathenism rather than suffer persecution. The profligacy of their character, and that of most of the other heretics, suggests how intimately principles are connected with practice, and errors in doctrine with immorality of life.

And as the wreck becomes a sea-mark to the mariner, so may these heresies, thus traced to their principles, warn us of our danger^k; especially teaching us that the system of Christianity needs no human additions to make it more perfect^l; that to be content to remain ignorant of what God has not thought proper to reveal, forms no inconsiderable part of Christian learning; and that the proper evidence of saving faith is subjection to the law as a rule of life. 1 Cor. ix. 21; Jude 3.

§ ii. *On the Epistles of St. Paul.*

The prominent place St. Paul holds as the writer of fourteen out of the twenty-one inspired Epistles, renders some notice of him necessary, as an introduction to his Epistles.

His Hebrew name was Saul: but after his conversion it was changed to Paul. The change appears to have been made in Cyprus^m, perhaps in compliment to Sergius Paulus, the proconsul of the island, who was converted to Christianity. His history, as collected from different parts of the New Testament, and as given principally by himself, is as follows:—He was a Jew of Tarsus, a city of Ciliciaⁿ; a free-born Roman citizen^o; a Pharisee, and the son of a Pharisee^p; circumcised the eighth day; of the tribe of Benjamin; a Hebrew of the Hebrews^q; brought up at the feet of Gamaliel; taught according to the perfect manner of the law of the fathers^r; being conversant also not only with Jewish but Greek literature^s; and thus distinguished from the rest of the Apostles as a man of education and learning.

He is first mentioned in the New Testament^t as a young

^k 1 Pet. ii. 2.

Mark x. 15.

^l Col. ii. 10.

^m Acts xiii. 4. 9.

ⁿ Acts xxi. 39.

^o Acts xxii. 28.

^p Acts xxiii. 6.

^q Phil. iii. 5.

^r Acts xxii. 3.

Gal. i. 14.

^s Acts xvii. 28.

Tit. i. 12.

^t Acts vii. 58.

man at whose feet the witnesses laid their garments on the stoning of Stephen, and who was therefore consenting to that martyr's death^u. From the eighth chapter of the Acts of the Apostles, it appears that he took an active part in the persecution which followed this martyrdom; but that, while breathing out threatening and slaughter on a persecuting errand to Damascus (probably A.D. 35), he was miraculously converted^v. He that was once a persecutor, a blasphemer, and injurious^w, became, as ordained by the Lord, and instructed immediately by Him^x, a chosen vessel to bear his name before the Jews^y, but more particularly before the Gentiles^z. He continued thus labouring for thirty years, till, as is generally believed, he was beheaded by order of Nero, at Rome, about A.D. 66.

Two particulars respecting his history and character, during this period, may be here noticed. He was distinguished—

First, by *zeal*—"labouring more abundantly than they all^a." We see him (as Paley has forcibly remarked), in the prosecution of his purpose, travelling from country to country^b, enduring every species of hardship, encountering every extremity of danger^c, assaulted by the populace^d, punished by the magistrates^e, scourged, beaten, stoned, left for dead^f, expecting wherever he came a renewal of the same treatment and the same dangers^g, yet when driven from one city preaching in the next^h, spending his whole time in the employmentⁱ, sacrificing to it his pleasures, his ease, his safety^k, persisting in this course to old age (through more than thirty years), unaltered by the experience of perverseness^l, ingratitude^m, prejudiceⁿ, and desertion^o, unsubdued by anxiety, want, labour, or persecu-

^u Acts xxii. 20.

^v Acts ix. 3—8.

^w 1 Tim. i. 13.

^x Gal. ii. 1.

^y Acts ix. 15.

^z Acts xiii. 46; xxii. 21.

Gal. ii. 8, 9.

^a 1 Cor. xv. 10.

^b Rom. xv. 19.

^c 2 Cor. xi. 23—27.

^d Acts xxi. 27, &c.

^e Acts xvi. 19, 20.

^f Acts xiv. 19, 20.

^g Acts xx. 23.

^h Acts xiii. 50, 51; xiv. 5—7.
19—21.

ⁱ Rom. i. 14, 15.

Acts xx. 24.

^k Phil. iii. 8; i. 20.

^l Acts xxviii. 17.

^m Gal. i. 6; iv. 14—20.

ⁿ 2 Cor. xii. 15.

^o 2 Tim. iv. 10, 16.

tions, unwearied by long confinement, undismayed by the prospect of death.—See Acts xxi. 13; 2 Cor. xii. 10; Phil. ii. 17; iv. 18; 2 Tim. iv. 17.

Secondly, by *knowledge*—"the abundance of revelations given to him." 2 Cor. xii. 7.

Macknight observes, "While the inspired Epistles of the other Apostles deserve to be read with the utmost attention, on account of the explication of particular doctrines and facts which they contain, and of the excellent precepts of piety and morality with which they abound, the Epistles of Paul must be regarded as the grand repository in which the whole of the Gospel doctrine is lodged, and from which the knowledge of it can be drawn with greatest advantage."—Macknight, Prelim. Ess., p. 72.

In illustration of this it may be briefly noticed, that in the Epistle to the Romans is a full declaration of the doctrine of original sin, and the way of man's justification. In the First Epistle to the Corinthians is the most complete account of the spiritual gifts bestowed on the Church; in that to the Galatians, of the design of the Mosaic law. The Epistles to the Ephesians and Colossians are distinguished as presenting most exalted views of Christian privilege, as asserting with peculiar force the right of the Gentiles to be admitted to all the blessings of the Gospel equally with the Jews, and without submitting to the Jewish law. In the Epistles to the Thessalonians, especially as connected with 1 Cor. xv., are many particulars respecting the future judgment and the resurrection from the dead. The Epistles to Timothy and Titus contain the fullest account of the qualifications and duties of Christian ministers; while in the Epistle to the Hebrews is given the largest explanation of the typical intention of the Levitical priesthood, and of the nature of Christ's priesthood, especially of his sacrifice and intercession. The Epistles of St. Paul contain no doctrines or duties which are not expressed or implied in the Epistles of the other Apostles, but, as in the instances above referred to, we have the same doctrines and duties, &c., more fully unfolded.

§ iii. *On the Epistle to the ROMANS.*

This Epistle was written about A.D. 58, and was addressed to the Church at Rome, which consisted partly of Jewish and partly of heathen converts. Its great design is to show how, as sinners, we are admitted into the favour of God.

The Apostle proves the Gentiles and the Jews to be guilty before God: and having arrived at this conclusion, that by the deeds of the law no flesh can be justified, he then declares how we are justified; namely, freely by the grace of God, through the redemption which is in Christ Jesus, whom God hath set forth to be a propitiation through faith in his blood, to declare his righteousness for the remission of sins that are past, that He might be just, and yet the justifier of him that believeth in Jesus. He confirms this view of justification by showing the agreement of the sacred writers on the subject; that Abraham was thus justified before God, not by works, but of grace; adding the testimony of David to the same effect. He then proceeds to state the privileges of justification by faith, as flowing from the obedience of Christ; proving them to be far greater than the evils arising out of Adam's disobedience.

He then guards the doctrine from abuse, showing that holiness is the necessary effect of justification; he again enlarges on its privileges, mourns over the state of his countrymen, in rejecting, through self-righteousness, this doctrine; vindicates their rejection by God on this account; intimates, however, that this is not a final rejection, but a dispensation which shall ultimately issue in their salvation, and God's glory. He then particularly dwells on the mercy of God as appearing in this mode of justification, urging it as the strongest motive to the entire dedication of themselves to his service in the diligent improvement of every Christian grace, and the faithful discharge of every Christian duty. Recommending himself to their prayers, he concludes with various salutations.

Macknight's concluding observation on this Epistle is, that "it is a writing which, for sublimity and truth of sentiment, for brevity and strength of expression, for

regularity in its structure, and, above all, for the unspeakable importance of the discoveries which it contains, stands unrivalled by any mere human composition, and as far exceeds the most celebrated productions of the learned Greeks and Romans, as the shining of the sun exceeds the twinkling of the stars."

§ iv. *On the First Epistle to the CORINTHIANS.*

Corinth, situated¹ on the isthmus which joins Peloponnesus to the rest of Greece, was, at the time when this Epistle was written, a place of extensive commerce, and the capital of the Roman province of Achaia. Its inhabitants were great admirers of eloquence, and of the vain philosophy then much cultivated; were filled with self-conceit, and notorious for their profligacy, which formed a distinguishing part even of their religion.

St. Paul came to Corinth about A.D. 51, when, as his general custom was, he first attempted the conversion of the Jews^p. But, finding them obstinate in their opposition to the Gospel, he turned to the Gentiles^q, and from them the Church was principally formed, as appears from Acts xviii. and 1 Cor. xii. 2. He remained there about a year and six months^r. But shortly after his departure, the peace of the Church was disturbed by one or more false teachers, probably Jews^s, who endeavoured to draw aside the converts from Paul and his doctrines, by calling in question the authority of his mission, and ridiculing the plain and simple style in which he delivered his instructions. Hence arose divisions and other irregularities among the Corinthians, totally inconsistent with the genuine spirit of the Gospel: such as uncleanness, covetousness, litigation, feasting with idolaters in their sacrifices, want of decorum in public worship, particularly in receiving the Lord's Supper; spiritual pride, on account of their miraculous gifts; uncharitableness; and by some, even a denial of the resurrection.

To correct these abuses, and also to answer some questions which the Corinthians had in a letter proposed to St.

^p Acts xviii. 4.

^q Acts xviii. 6.

^r Acts xviii. 11.

^s 2 Cor. xi. 22.

Paul (in which letter, however, they had not mentioned the existence of those abuses, 1 Cor. i. 11, 12; v. 1), was the design of this Epistle; it was written from Ephesus, and sent to Corinth by Titus, who was directed to bring an account to Paul of the manner in which it was received by the Corinthians. He preferred writing to coming, as he had first intended, on account of the severities which, if present, he would have been obliged to exercise.

A careful study of this Epistle, with reference to the character of the Apostle, will afford a fine illustration of the practical influence of those doctrines of grace which he taught; for instance, his awful sense of his responsibility, as a minister, and his jealousy over himself^t; his entire dependence for success on the Divine blessing, yet his diligent use of means^u; his prudence, fidelity, and tenderness^v; his humility, even while asserting his apostolic authority; and his little regard for those gifts, by which he was so distinguished, as compared with charity, *i. e.* Christian love^w.

Such conduct is a pattern not only to ministers, but also to private Christians, in every age.

§ v. *On the Second Epistle to the CORINTHIANS.*

This Epistle was written about a year after the first, and explains more at length the motives and feelings by which St. Paul had been influenced in writing that Epistle^x. It is addressed not merely to the Church at Corinth, but to the saints in all Achaia, the province of which Corinth was the capital.

The leading object of the Apostle seems to be, the further vindication of his apostolic authority, which the success of his first Epistle enabled him more fully to enlarge upon. He enumerates his labours and sufferings, appeals to his success and character among them, yet with the most zealous care not to praise himself, but to establish them in those truths with which he had been entrusted by God for their salvation, and on the glory of which he particularly dwells.

^t 1 Cor. ii. 3; ix. 16. 27.

^w 1 Cor. xiii. 1, &c.

^u 1 Cor. iii. 6—9; xv. 10.

^x 2 Cor. ii. 1—3. 9, &c.

^v 1 Cor. iii. 2; vi. 12; iv. 14. 2 Cor. ii. 4.

In reading this Epistle, we should not overlook the circumstances of the writer, who (as it seems probable from ch. i. 8) had just escaped from the riot occasioned by Demetrius at Ephesus^y. “Nothing,” remarks Paley, in his *Horæ Paulinæ*, “could be more expressive of the circumstances in which the history^z describes Paul to have been at the time when this Epistle purports to have been written, or rather, nothing could be more expressive of the sensations arising from those circumstances, than this passage^a. It is the calm recollection of a mind emerged from the confusion of instant danger. It is that devotion and solemnity of thought which follows a recent deliverance.” And this seems to give a tone to the whole letter^b.

This Epistle, as well as the first, displays the character of the Apostle in many interesting points of view. His intense affection^c for the Corinthians, as his spiritual children^d in Christ; his joy at their return to repentance, yet anxiety that it should be perfected among those who still inclined to the false teacher; the delicacy and address with which he exhorts them to a more liberal contribution^e; his astonishing labours^f, taken in connexion with the deep

y Acts xix.

z Acts xix.

a 2 Cor. i. 8.

b 2 Cor. iv. 8; v. 2;
vi. 9; vii. 4.

c 2 Cor. xii. 15.

d 1 Cor. iv. 14, 15.

e 2 Cor. ix.

f 2 Cor. xi. 23, &c.*

* A striking illustration of the agreement of the Acts with the Epistles of Paul is noticed by Paley, in this enumeration of the Apostle's sufferings:—

“St. Paul says (xi. 24, 25), ‘Of the Jews five times received I forty stripes save one; thrice was I beaten with rods, thrice I suffered shipwreck; a night and a day have I been in the deep.’ Of these no notice occurs in the Acts, as it was not the purpose of that book to give a history of all Paul's travels: but Paul also says, ‘once was I stoned.’ In Acts xiv. 19, and prior to the date of this second Epistle to the Corinthians, is an account of his being stoned at Lystra; but a violent attempt to stone him was made at Iconium, also prior to the date of this Epistle, which the history informs us he was enabled, by flight, to escape. Now, had the assault been completed, had the history related that a stone was thrown, as it relates that preparations were made, both by Jews and Gentiles, to stone him and his companions, or even had the account of this transaction stopped without going on to inform us that Paul and his companions were aware of their

sense he every where expresses of his insufficiency to think or to do any thing as of himself^g; his humility in noticing his thorn in the flesh, and in allowing fourteen years to elapse before he mentioned the extraordinary mark he had of the Divine favour, in being caught up into the third heaven^h; with various other topics, on which it is not within the limits of this work to enlarge, may be very profitably followed out by the reader of this Epistle; while, interwoven with the whole, he will easily discover the most important doctrines of the Gospel. Thus, iii. 5, &c. shows us the inability of man; v. 21, the righteousness which God has provided for him; v. 9, 10, the diligence with which he must nevertheless labour in the great work of our salvation: vii. 1, instructs us as to the proper effect of the promises of the Gospel; v. 14, what is its great motive to obedience; xiii. 14, concentrates every blessing which language can express, or the heart of man conceive, as flowing to us from that love of God which leads us to love Him in return.

§ vi. *On the Epistle to the GALATIANS.*

Galatia was not a city, but a province of Asia Minor, and derived its name from the Gauls, who (about 240 years B.C.) took possession of it by force of arms, and settled there. Its inhabitants were but imperfectly civilized. St. Paul visited Galatia about A.D. 51, and was the instrument of planting several Churches thereⁱ. From chap. i. 6, it would appear that this Epistle was written not long afterwards.

The subject of this Epistle partakes of the nature both of those to the Corinthians and of that to the Romans. Like those to the Corinthians, it involves Paul's vindication of his apostolic authority; in which he proves that he was

^g 2 Cor. iii. 5.

^h 2 Cor. xii.

ⁱ Comp. Acts xvi. 6; xviii. 23;
and Gal. iv. 13—15.

danger and fled; a contradiction between the history and the Epistle would have ensued. Truth is necessarily consistent; but it is scarcely possible that independent accounts, not having truth to guide them, should thus advance to the very brink of contradiction without falling into it."—Page 218.

taught immediately by Christ ^k, and was therefore on an equal footing with the other Apostles. Like that to the Romans, it treats of the great doctrine of justification by faith alone, from which the Galatians, very soon after St. Paul had left them ^l, and greatly to his surprise, had been seduced by false teachers, who insisted that submission to the Mosaic law, and especially to circumcision, was necessary to salvation: probably insinuating, that whatever Paul might profess among them, he had himself at other times and other places urged the same doctrine. This the Apostle sharply ^m, yet with the tenderest affection ⁿ, refutes, by showing that the design of that law was not to justify, but to convince of sin, and lead to Christ; by faith in whom, Abraham, the father of the faithful, 430 years before the giving of that law, was justified ^o; and that he himself, so far from having ever preached the necessity of the Gentiles submitting to Jewish institutions, as circumcision, &c., was daily suffering the bitterest persecution from the Jews for preaching the contrary ^p.

He does not enter so much at length on the subject of justification by faith alone, as in his Epistle to the Romans, probably because the Galatians had had the previous benefit of his ministry, which the Romans had not. But he places the doctrine in a very striking point of view, by declaring, "Christ is become of *none effect* to you, whosoever of you are justified by the law; ye are fallen from grace ^q."

Let us, then, through the Spirit, wait for the hope of righteousness by faith; like the Apostle, glorying only in the cross of Christ ^r: while our lives, exhibiting the fruit of the Spirit ^s, prove that ours is that faith which worketh by love ^t.

The fickleness of the Galatians, as manifested in this Epistle, shows how little we can depend upon warmth of feeling in religion as an evidence of strength of religious principle ^u.

^k Gal. i. 1.

^l Gal. i. 6.

^m Gal. iii. 1, &c.

ⁿ Gal. iv. 19.

^o Gal. iii. 6, &c.

^p Gal. v. 11.

^q Gal. v. 4.

^r Gal. vi. 14.

^s Gal. v. 22.

^t Gal. v. 6.

^u Gal. iv. 15, 16.

§ vii. *On the Epistle to the EPHESIANS.*

Ephesus was a city of Ionia, and capital of Proconsular Asia; it was also famous for a temple of Diana, which was esteemed one of the seven wonders of the world. Its inhabitants were noted for their superstitious arts^v, luxury, and lasciviousness. St. Paul preached the Gospel for a short time at Ephesus, about A.D. 53^w; and in the following year returned, and remained there more than two years^x. He wrote this Epistle about A.D. 61, during the early part of his imprisonment at Rome. It consists of six chapters: the first three of which are usually considered as doctrinal, and the others practical.

“Its scope is to establish the Ephesians in the faith, and to this end to give them more exalted views of the eternal love of God, and of the excellency and dignity of Christ; to show them that they were saved by grace, and that the Gentiles, however wretched they had formerly been, now had equal privileges with the Jews; to encourage them by declaring with what stedfastness he suffered for the truth, and with what earnestness he prayed for their establishment and perseverance in it; and, finally, in consequence of their profession, to engage them to the practice of those duties which became them as Christians.”—Dodridge.

The style of this Epistle remarkably shows the state of the Apostle's mind at the time of his writing it—a mind transported with the unsearchable riches of God's wisdom and love, in the redemption of man, though at the very time his body was restrained by bonds and a prison: of this, his prayer for the Ephesians is a striking example^y. Yet, with a heart thus filled with heavenly things, his minute attention to relative and moral duties^z is very observable, as also his resting the motive to every duty on the relation in which we stand to Christ^a and the Holy Spirit^b.

This Epistle contains no blame or complaint whatever;

^v Acts xix. 18, 19.

^w Acts xviii. 19—21.

^x Acts xix. 1, &c.

^y Eph. iii. 14, &c.

^z Eph. iv. 28; v.; vi. 1—9.

^a Eph. iv. 32; v. 2. 25; vi. 5.

^b Eph. iv. 30.

and the distinguished faith and holiness of this Church, contrasted with its state a few years after^c, is a solemn warning to Christians in every age, of the fearful consequences of forsaking their first love^d.

§ viii. *On the Epistle to the PHILIPPIANS.*

Philippi was a city of Macedonia, and a Roman colony; and is distinguished as being the first place in Europe where St. Paul preached the Gospel, probably about A.D. 51. Acts xvi. 12.

The Philippians were greatly attached to St. Paul, and testified their affection by sending him supplies, even when labouring for other Churches^e; and when they heard he was under confinement at Rome, they sent Epaphroditus, one of their pastors, to minister to his wants^f. On the return of Epaphroditus, St. Paul, by this letter, written towards the conclusion of his first imprisonment (about A.D. 62), acknowledges their kindness. His leading object seems to be, while cautioning them against Judaizing teachers, to urge them to higher attainments in holiness^g and mutual love^h; directing them to the wonderful condescension of Christ as their patternⁱ; his righteousness as their only dependence^k; his grace as their strength^l; and presenting his own example^m to enforce his precepts.

Here again the tendernessⁿ, the dignity^o, the humility^p, the disinterestedness of the Apostle, are very observable. He wrote this Epistle "weeping."

The remarks of Archbishop Secker on the character of St. Paul, as illustrated by this Epistle, are so very appropriate, that though long, the writer cannot refrain from copying them. "As the excellent characters of the first believers and teachers of Christianity are in general a strong recommendation of it to mankind, so that of St. Paul in par-

^c Rev. ii. 1—7.

^d Rev. ii. 4.

^e Phil. iv. 15, 16.

2 Cor. xi. 9.

^f Phil. ii. 25; iv. 10. 14. 18.

^g Phil. ii. 12; iv. 8.

^h Phil. ii. 1, &c.

ⁱ Phil. ii. 5.

^k Phil. iii. 9.

^l Phil. iv. 13.

^m Phil. iii. 17; iv. 9.

ⁿ Phil. iii. 18.

^o Phil. iv. 11. 18.

^p Phil. iii. 12.

ticular shines with distinguished lustre throughout his whole history, but especially his Epistles, the faithful pictures of his soul. Even in this short one to the Philippians, it is surprising to observe how great a variety of most exalted and engaging virtue he shows. The authority of the Apostle is so perfectly tempered with the condescension of the fellow-Christian; the expressions of his tenderness for those to whom he writes are so endearing and instructive at the same time; his acknowledgments of their kindness to him so equally full of dignity, humility, and disinterestedness; his mention of his past persecutions is so mild, and of his present danger (for he wrote in a prison) so cheerful; his attention to the supporting of their courage is so affecting, and his confidence, that both he and they should persevere and conquer, is so noble and yet so modest; his deliberation whether life or death be eligible, is so calm, and his preference to live, even in misery, for their sakes and that of the Gospel, is so genuinely heroic, yet fully equalled by the composed and triumphant mention which he elsewhere makes of his approaching martyrdom; his zeal for propagating religion is so ardent, yet attended with so deep a concern that it be true religion; he is so earnest to guard them both against a superstitious reliance on outward ordinances, and a licentious abuse of the doctrines of faith and grace; so solicitous to improve them in rational piety and meek beneficent virtue; so intent to fix their minds on every thing worthy and amiable, and raise them above every thing gloomy and anxious; his warmth in this glorious cause is so far from being affected or forced, and every expression so evidently flows from a heart which cannot help overflowing; that whoever shall read this one Epistle with attention and fairness, under all the disadvantages of a translation made word for word, and broken into short verses, will feel a strong impression on his mind, that the writer of it must have been an uncommonly great and good man, every way deserving of the high rank which he claims, of a commissioned servant of God, and incapable of claiming it falsely."

§ ix. *On the Epistle to the COLOSSIANS.*

Colosse was a city of Phrygia, in Asia Minor, and in the neighbourhood of Laodicea and Hierapolis^q. The Colossians, having heard of St. Paul's imprisonment at Rome, sent thither Epaphras, a minister of their Church, to comfort the Apostle, and to inform him of their state. Epaphras, shortly after his arrival at Rome, was also imprisoned. St. Paul therefore sends this Epistle by Tychicus and Onesimus, who were also the bearers of that to the Ephesians, to which this Epistle bears a near resemblance.

Its great subject is the glory of the person and office of Christ; on which he founds a caution^r, that being com-

^q Col. iv. 13.

^r Col. ii. 4.

plete in Christ, they should be on their guard against subjection to Mosaic ceremonies or human philosophy, as though they could add any thing to the perfect work of Christ. On the same great and only foundation, the Apostle urges the discharge of every relative duty, so that whatever they did in word or deed, they should do all in the name of the Lord Jesus, giving thanks to God and the Father by Him^s.

“Whoever,” says Michaelis, “would understand the Epistles to the Ephesians and Colossians must read them together. The one is, in most places, a Commentary on the other, the meaning of single passages in one Epistle, which, if considered alone, might be variously interpreted, being determined by the parallel passages in the other Epistle.”

§ x. *On the First Epistle to the THESSALONIANS.*

Thessalonica was the chief city of Macedonia, and, being a sea-port, was the constant resort of strangers from all quarters. St. Paul established a Church there, chiefly among the Gentiles. Great success at first attended his labours^t, but after a short stay, he was driven away by the fury of the Jews^u. Attempting to return to them^v, but being hindered by the same cause, he first sent Timothy from Athens to confirm them in their faith, and to inquire into their conduct; and when Timothy came back from them to Corinth^w, wrote this letter; the leading object of which is to encourage them under their persecutions, particularly by a consideration of Christ's second coming, which he urges as a ground of comfort under bereavement, and as a motive to holiness.

The Apostle's joy at their stedfastness, his tenderness of affection^x, his fervent prayer for them^y, and earnest desire for their prayers^z, are very observable. Highly as he commends them, yet, from the caution he still finds it

^s Col. iii. 17.

^t Acts xvii. 4.

^u Acts xvii. 5—15.

^v 1 Thess. ii. 18.

^w Acts xviii. 5.

^x 1 Thess. ii. 7, &c.

^y 1 Thess. i. 2; iii. 10. 13.

^z 1 Thess. v. 25.

necessary to give^a, we see the difficulty of escaping altogether from those vices which have been deeply rooted by education and habit.

This is generally admitted to have been one of the earliest written of all St. Paul's letters, probably about A.D. 51.

§ xi. *On the Second Epistle to the THESSALONIANS.*

This Epistle breathes the same spirit of earnest affection and prayer which characterizes the first. It was evidently written soon after it, and corrects a mistake of the Thessalonians, who, from some passages in that Epistle, imagined that the day of judgment was near at hand. In removing this misunderstanding, however, the Apostle introduces a very remarkable prophecy, respecting an awful apostasy which should first come upon the Church; and adds various precepts, particularly with regard to their intercourse with those among them who walked disorderly.

The predictions of St. Paul in this Epistle afford another illustration how the thread of prophecy is interwoven with the whole scheme of revelation, and evidently proceeds from the mind of Him who alone knows the end from the beginning. For the Apostle takes up a subject which Daniel 500 years before had introduced^b, adding various particulars, but leaving it to St. John^c to perfect all that prophecy intended to communicate.

The three following Epistles—namely, the First and Second to Timothy, and that to Titus—are distinguished from the other Epistles of the New Testament, as being addressed personally to Christian ministers; but though of especial importance to them, as containing “a complete body of divinity, inspired ecclesiastical canons, to be observed by the Christian clergy of all communions to the end of the world,” these Epistles also contain general instructions for all, regarding both doctrine and precept.—See Macknight.

^a 1 Thess. iv. 3.

^b Dan. vii. 25; viii. 25; xi. 36.

^c Rev. xviii.

§ xii. *On the First Epistle to TIMOTHY.*

Timothy, to whom this Epistle was addressed, was a native of Lystra, a city of Lycaonia, in Asia Minor. His father was a Gentile, but his mother Eunice was a Jewess^d, herself the daughter of a pious mother. By her care he was from a child instructed in the knowledge of the Holy Scriptures^e; and is a remarkable proof of the blessing which attends such an education. He was of a sickly constitution^f, but eminent for his gifts and graces^g. When young, he was ordained a minister by St. Paul^h; and after being circumcised, (not as a thing necessary to salvation, but to render him more acceptable to the Jews,) he from that time regularly acted with that Apostle, both attending him personally, and being sent by him to other places. St. Paul, to whom probably Timothy owed his conversionⁱ, always mentions him with the greatest affection, and joins his name with his own in six Epistles; viz. in the 2nd to the Corinthians, in those to the Philippians and Colossians, in the 1st and 2nd to the Thessalonians, and in that to Philemon.

Timothy was left at Ephesus to preserve sound doctrine^k, to exercise a wholesome discipline^l, and to ordain others for the ministry^m. The title of Bishop is given to him by ecclesiastical writers. St. Paul wrote this Epistle in order to instruct him how to perform his various duties, charging him to "lay hands suddenly on no manⁿ," describing the qualifications and duties of Christian ministers, and showing him how to regulate his own conduct and ministry, both in the refutation of error and the establishment of truth.

§ xiii. *On the Second Epistle to TIMOTHY.*

This Epistle was written during St. Paul's second imprisonment at Rome, about A.D. 66. It derives a peculiar solemnity from its having been written just before the

^d Acts xvi. 1.^e 2 Tim. iii. 15.^f 1 Tim. v. 23.^g 2 Tim. i. 5; iii. 15.

1 Cor. iv. 17.

^h 1 Tim. iv. 12.

2 Tim. i. 6.

ⁱ 1 Tim. i. 2.^k 1 Tim. i. 3.^l 1 Tim. v. 1—21.^m 1 Tim. v. 22.

2 Tim. ii. 2.

ⁿ 1 Tim. v. 22.

Apostle's martyrdom, and a peculiar grandeur from the feelings which he displays in the immediate view of that awful event. To him death appears already abolished^o, and heaven open^p; yet in no Epistle does he seem more impressed with the necessity of personal holiness, or more urgent to enforce it^q. "Imagine a pious father, under sentence of death for his piety and benevolence to mankind, writing to a dutiful and affectionate son, that he might see and embrace him again before he left the world, particularly that he might leave with him his dying commands, and charge him to live and suffer as he had done, and you will have the frame of the Apostle's mind during the writing of the whole Epistle."—Benson's preface to 2nd Timothy.

§ xiv. *On the Epistle to Titus.*

Though Titus was so eminent as a Christian minister, he is not once mentioned in the Acts of the Apostles. The few particulars which are known concerning him are gathered from the Epistles of St. Paul; from which we learn that he was a Greek or Gentile^r, probably converted from idolatry by that Apostle^s. He is first mentioned as accompanying Paul and Barnabas, when they went up from Antioch to the council at Jerusalem^t. An attempt was made to oblige him to submit to circumcision; but as he was a Gentile, and therefore under very different circumstances from Timothy, St. Paul resolutely withstood it, as involving a compromise of principle^u. It is probable that Titus often attended the Apostle, being spoken of by him^v as his partner and fellow-labourer^w. But Crete was the chief seat of his labours, of which place he is always spoken of in ecclesiastical history as the first Bishop. Crete is a large island in the Mediterranean, and is now called Candia.

This Epistle has the same general purpose as the Epistles to Timothy; Titus having been left at Crete, as Timothy had been at Ephesus, to "set in order the things that were wanting," and to "ordain elders in every city^x." With directions respecting the qualifications and duties of Chris-

^o 2 Tim. i. 10.

^p 2 Tim. iv. 8. 18.

^q 2 Tim. ii. 19.

^r Gal. ii. 3.

^s Tit. i. 4.

^t Gal. ii. 1.

^u Gal. ii. 5.

^v 2 Cor. viii. 23.

^w See also 2 Cor. ii. 13.

^x Tit. i. 5.

tian ministers, the treatment of false teachers and heretics, and his own conduct generally, are mingled the most important doctrines. Nor are the duties of the humblest ranks of life overlooked. Even slaves are called upon to *adorn* the doctrines of the Gospel by a holy example. It is particularly observable, that while referring man's salvation wholly to grace^u, to the free mercy of God through Christ^v, the Apostle urges this as laying us under the strongest obligation to holiness; the end of Christ's redemption being to purify unto Himself a peculiar people, zealous of good works^w.

§ XV. *On the Epistle to PHILEMON.*

Philemon, to whom St. Paul wrote this Epistle, was an inhabitant of Colosse^x, and probably owed his conversion to the Apostle (ver. 19).

Onesimus, his slave, had run away, and wandered to Rome, where he met with Paul, then a prisoner there, through whom he was converted to Christianity. The object of this Epistle, of which Onesimus was the bearer, was to persuade his master to receive him back, not merely as a slave, but with feelings of esteem as a fellow-Christian. To accomplish this, the Apostle uses the most skilful address, touching with the greatest delicacy, yet with much force, on those points which were most likely to influence Philemon. "We have here," as Paley remarks, "the warm, affectionate, authoritative teacher interceding with an absent friend for a beloved convert; aged, and in prison, content to supplicate and entreat, yet so as not to lay aside the respect due to his character and office."

Besides the somewhat new point of view in which it presents the Apostle's character, the most important truths are implied in this Epistle. In the conversion of a runaway slave by one himself in prison, are displayed the wonders of God's providence and grace, overruling evil for good; it also affords great encouragement to us, even when our means are most limited, to attempt to reclaim the wicked. The nature of Christian liberty is also illustrated. While

^u Tit. ii. 11.

^v Tit. iii.

^w Tit. ii. 14.

^x Col. iv. 9.

Onesimus, as a Christian, became the Apostle's son, and Philemon's brother, this in no respect interfered with the civil duties he owed to Philemon as his master^y. Yet those of the highest rank are taught by this Epistle to condescend to men of low estate, and especially to those who, however mean their station, are truly the disciples of Christ.

§ XVI. *On the Epistle to the HEBREWS.*

This Epistle was written by St. Paul, about A.D. 62, to the converted Jews living in Judea. He has not affixed his name, which, as he was peculiarly the Apostle to the Gentiles, was offensive to the unconverted Jews, and hoped, probably, by this means, to remove an objection to their reading it.

He seems in this Epistle to have two leading objects:—

First,—To guard them against falling back into Judaism;

Secondly,—To comfort them under the persecution they were suffering on account of their religious profession.

I. The first ten chapters are chiefly employed in the first of these objects. In order to comprehend the scope of them, consider, when a Jew gave up Judaism, and embraced Christianity, what it required of him to *renounce*:—a ritual of much outward splendour, which he knew had been divinely appointed by the ministration of angels, and which had hitherto honourably distinguished him from the rest of the world. That he was to renounce as no longer essential. Consider, further, what he was called upon to *believe*:—that his temple and city were foredoomed to destruction: that the customs which Moses, the most distinguished of prophets, had delivered, were to be changed^z, and by whom? by Jesus of Nazareth—despised, rejected, and crucified by those who sat in Moses' seat.

To meet this state of mind, the Apostle establishes, by quotations from their own Scriptures (which quotations form a very observable peculiarity of this Epistle), the Divinity of Christ, and therefore that this dispensation

^y Philemon, ver. 12.

^z Acts vi. 14.

was far superior even to that which had been introduced by the ministration of angels. He shows that the humiliation to which Christ had been subject was a necessary part of what He came to do; that as He was superior to Moses as a Mediator, so was He a priest of a higher order than that of Aaron—one established before that of Aaron, and to which Abraham himself had owned submission; a priest after the order of Melchizedek, who united in his person the office of Priest and King, and whose mysterious origin well typified the Divine nature of Christ. He further shows from their own Scriptures, that the covenant of Moses was temporary; that the sacrifices of the law were necessarily in their own nature insufficient, and, being designed to be typical of Christ, were abolished by his coming. These arguments are interspersed with various earnest exhortations to steadfastness, and were directly of a tendency to guard them against those subtleties by which they would be tempted to apostasy.

II. In the eleventh and twelfth chapters his object seems to be to suggest such considerations as would tend to support them under their trials; by directing their attention to the great principle which has sustained those saints who had gone before them in suffering, and also to the example and grace of Christ Jesus, the author and finisher of their faith. The thirteenth chapter concludes with various admonitions suited to their circumstances.

§ xvii. *On the Seven Catholic or General Epistles.*

These last seven Epistles have, for many centuries, been termed "Catholic" or "General" Epistles, because most of them were addressed, not to particular Churches or persons, as those of St. Paul, but to the body either of Jewish or Gentile converts, dispersed over several countries.

"A wicked opinion having sprung up even in the Apostles' days, by misunderstanding Paul's arguments; Peter, John, James, and Jude, aimed in their Epistles principally at this end, to vindicate the doctrine of Paul from the false consequences charged upon it, and to show that faith without works is nothing worth. But indeed Paul

does not speak of faith at large, but only of that living, fruitful, evangelical faith, which he himself saith worketh by love. As for that faith void of good works, which these men thought sufficient for salvation, he declareth positively against it. Peter calls it wresting^a, because Paul was, in truth, of the same opinion with the other Apostles, and held eternal life impossible to be attained by any faith which had not the attestation of a holy life."—Augustine, quoted by Macknight.

§ xviii. *On the Epistle of JAMES.*

In the catalogue of the Apostles, given by the Evangelists, we find two persons of the name of James, of whom one was the son of Zebedee, and brother of John, the other the son of Alpheus or Cleophas (which are supposed to be different modes of writing the same name, or different names for the same person). The latter James is the author of this Epistle. He was a near relation of our Lord^b, and is called James the Less^c, probably to distinguish him from the other James, who was called James the Great.

He appears, from Acts xv. 13. 19, to have presided over the Church at Jerusalem; and this is confirmed by ancient testimony. His constant residence there exposed him to great danger and difficulty, but he admirably united zeal with discretion, was greatly revered for his devotion, and was termed, by way of eminence, James the Just. A reference to the following passages will further show how highly he was esteemed: Acts xii. 17; xxi. 18; 1 Cor. xv. 7; Gal. i. 19; ii. 9. 12. He held his perilous situation of Bishop of Jerusalem for about thirty years. There are different accounts of the circumstances of his death, but all are agreed that he died a violent death from the persecution of the Jews.

This Epistle was written not long before his death, and the destruction of Jerusalem. One of its objects is, to encourage the believing Jews under their present and approaching sufferings. But its distinguishing feature is

^a 2 Pet. iii. 16.

^b Gal. i. 19.

^c Mark xv. 40.

that of reproof on account of an error, to which allusion has been already made, and into which many had fallen.

The prevailing error which attended the *introduction* of the Gospel, (and which Paul was appointed by the Holy Spirit to meet, especially in his Epistles to the Romans and Galatians,) was that we are justified in part by works; as opposed to this, St. Paul shows that we are justified freely by grace through faith alone. But now, where the Gospel had been some time *established*, the tendencies of corrupt nature were, to pervert it by overlooking the importance of works as a necessary evidence of saving faith. Many professing Christians, it appears, were guilty of partiality to the rich, contempt of the poor, censoriousness, envy, contention, covetousness, presumptuous disregard of God's providence, oppression, and luxury; and yet confident of salvation, because they held a speculative belief of the doctrines of the Gospel. To show them the unsoundness of such a faith, is the object of the Apostle's arguments; and from the very example of Abraham, by which St. Paul illustrates the doctrine of justification by faith alone, he proves that it is of the very nature of *saving* faith to bring forth good works: and that if good works are not the result, though a man *say* he have faith, he has none which will profit to his salvation.

This Epistle may be considered as of the greatest practical importance, especially as a test of character to those who have long made a profession of religion. The vigour of Abraham's faith appeared in that, more than twenty years after he was admitted into a state of justification before God, he displayed its continued practical influence in his readiness to offer up even his son Isaac at the command of God. Compare Gen. xv. 6, with xxii. 9—12.

§ xix. *On the First Epistle of PETER.*

Simon, surnamed Peter by our Lord, was the brother of Andrew, and through him Peter seems first to have been introduced to the knowledge of the Saviour^d. He was a married man, had a boat and nets, and a furnished house,

^d John i. 41.

and maintained himself as a fisherman. After he entered on the duties of his apostolic office, we see him distinguished by ardent affection to our Lord, and a natural forwardness to speak on behalf of the rest^e. He was on various occasions distinguished by our Lord. He was one of the three Apostles admitted by Him to witness the raising of Jairus's daughter^f, the transfiguration^g, and the agony in Gethsemane^h.

In the narrative of our Lord's death and resurrection, St. Peter's fall and recovery form a deeply interesting and instructive part. To him the merciful Redeemer first appeared after He had risen from the grave, as if to encourage him in his repentance: and subsequently invited him, by an appeal to his love, to feed the lambs of his fold.

After our Lord's ascension, St. Peter appears prominently in the earlier part of the Acts of the Apostlesⁱ; and there is one fact in which he stands pre-eminent above the rest, namely, that, as on the day of Pentecost he was the first to preach the Gospel to the *Jews*, so also in his mission to Cornelius, the Roman soldier, he was the first to preach the Gospel to the *Gentiles*; and, in this sense, the keys of the kingdom of heaven were given to him, that he might be the first to unlock to mankind and open before them the unsearchable riches of Christ. These facts do not imply that he had any supreme dignity or jurisdiction over the other Apostles; and Matt. xxiii. 8, and Gal. ii. 11, plainly prove he had not. The testimony of antiquity confirms the same truth.

No mention is made of St. Peter in the Acts of the Apostles after the council at Jerusalem, nor is any subsequent circumstance recorded of him in the Epistles, except that he was at Antioch not long afterwards^k. His ministry was chiefly among the Jews^l: and he is supposed to have preached to the Jews of the dispersion who were dwelling in Pontus, Galatia, Bithynia, Cappadocia, and Proconsular Asia, and at length, coming to Rome, about

^e Mark viii. 32.
John vi. 68, 69.

^f Mark v. 37.

^g Matt. xvii. 1.

^h Matt. xxvi. 37.
Mark xiv. 33.

ⁱ Acts i. 15; ii. 14; iii. 12; iv. 8;
v. 3. 29; viii. 14; x. 5; xi. 2;
xii. 3; xv. 7.

^k Gal. ii. 11.

^l Gal. ii. 7.

the year 66, to have been crucified^m with his head downwards; himself, as Ambrose informs us, having desired that his crucifixion might be in that manner, not thinking himself worthy to die in the same manner as his Divine Master had died. His humility, as illustrated by the Gospel of St. Mark, has already been alluded to. His honourable notice of Paul as his beloved brother, though Paul had publicly exposed him to reproof, and had recorded that reproof in his Epistle to the Galatians, to whom Peter himself was writingⁿ, exhibits a fine comment on his exhortation to others, "Be clothed with humility °."

This Epistle was probably written to both Jewish and Gentile converts scattered throughout Asia Minor, and is peculiarly characterized by energy and dignity. It is, as Ostervald remarks, one of the finest books of the New Testament. Its general design is to animate Christians to walk worthy of their exalted privileges, by well-doing to put to silence their adversaries; and also to suggest such considerations, as would support them under those severe persecutions to which they were becoming more and more subject. This design naturally introduces the great doctrines of the Gospel, as the motive and guide to their conduct; he points out to them Christ as the great foundation on which to build; his atonement foretold by prophets, the subject of the contemplation of angels (ch. i. 12), ordained before the foundation of the world; his glorious resurrection, ascension, and gift of the Spirit; his continued care, as the Shepherd and Bishop of their souls; his example as a suffering Saviour; the obligations of their baptismal covenant; and the awful solemnity of the last judgment. These are the great motives to patience and holiness which, like his beloved brother Paul, he continually urges; like him also he descends to the minute enforcement of every relative duty, while he gives the most exalted view of the privileges to which we are called as believers in Christ.

§ XX. *On the Second Epistle of PETER.*

As in his first Epistle Peter exhorts to patience under the tyranny of *persecutors*, so in this he exhorts to perse-

^m John xxi. 18.
2 Pet. i. 14.

ⁿ Gal. ii. 11; 1 Pet. i. 1; 2 Pet. iii. 1.
° 1 Pet. v. 5.

verance in the truths of the Gospel against the deceptions of *heretics*, and the profaneness of scoffers, describing their character, and the certainty of their destruction, and urging, as the best preservative against their influence, diligence in the improvement of every Christian grace.

This Epistle, like the second of those from St. Paul to Timothy, was penned when the writer knew himself to be drawing near to martyrdom, and it derives a solemn interest from that consideration. It may be remarked, how important holiness appears to him at the moment when he was enjoying the highest anticipation of a glorious immortality; and with what peculiar earnestness, as in the prospect of Christ's second coming, he urges it. On reading the views which are here presented to us of the perfections of God, the glory of Christ, the tremendous consequences of sin, and the grandeur of the coming judgment, we are naturally led to ask, Whence had this poor fisherman such wisdom, but from God? Lardner observes, that Peter's two Epistles, with his two discourses in the Acts, and the multitudes who were converted by these discourses, are monuments of a Divine inspiration, and of the fulfilment of Christ's promise to Peter and Andrew, "Follow me, and I will make you fishers of men."

St. Peter, after a life of suffering, and with the immediate prospect of the agonies of crucifixion, rejoices in the choice he had made of the service of Christ. Let this encourage us to make that choice also. His last exhortation to the Christian Church is, "Grow in grace, and in the knowledge of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ;" and his last testimony is to the divinity of his Lord: "To him be glory both now and for ever. Amen P."

§ XXI. *On the First Epistle of JOHN.*

It is a remarkable fact, that the denial of the *human* and not of the *Divine* nature of our Blessed Lord, was the first error respecting his person with which the Church was disturbed. To establish the Church, therefore, in sound views respecting the person and office of Christ,

his human and Divine nature, and his atonement, is the leading object of this Epistle. But, as is the case with all the inspired Epistles, this is done, not in the form of abstract discussion, but in a spirit of the most persuasive tenderness. St. John particularly enlarges on the love of God in redemption, urging it as a motive to holiness and mutual love. This Epistle is, throughout, especially useful, as offering many tests by which to try the sincerity of our Christian profession ⁹.

§ xxii. *On the Second Epistle of JOHN.*

Of the thirteen verses contained in this second Epistle, eight are in substance found in the first. St. John is supposed by some persons to have written this letter to a particular Church; but the more common opinion is, that it was addressed to a woman, and a mother, particularly to guard her against the prevailing error of the times, respecting the person of our Blessed Lord.

An apostolic Epistle, so addressed, and on such a subject, would seem to imply the importance in the sight of God of the station of a Christian mother, the earnestness with which she should interest herself in the religious welfare of her children, and the encouragement which, by so doing, she will give to Christian ministers, and to the progress of truth.

§ xxiii. *On the Third Epistle of JOHN.*

Gaius, to whom this Epistle is addressed, and who is probably the person mentioned 1 Cor. i. 14, and Rom. xvi. 23, was an eminent Christian, particularly distinguished for his hospitality to those who went about preaching the Gospel. The Apostle expresses his affectionate joy at this and other evidences of his piety, cautions him against one Diotrophes, noted for his ambition and turbulence, and strongly recommends Demetrius to his friendship: deferring other things to a personal conversation.

§ xxiv. *On the Epistle of JUDE.*

Jude, or Judas, who was surnamed Thaddeus, or Leb-beus, and was also called the brother (*i. e.* a near relation

⁹ 1 John ii. 4, 5. 15; iii. 7. 15; iv. 13; v. 4. 18.

of our Lord^r, was the son of Alpheus, brother of James the Less, and one of the twelve Apostles.

The design of his Epistle is to guard the Christian Church against those false teachers who had already insinuated themselves into it, and to contend with the utmost earnestness for the true faith, against the dangerous tenets which they disseminated, resolving the whole of Christianity into a speculative belief and outward profession of the Gospel. One of the perverse things which these corrupt teachers spoke, for the purpose of alluring the wicked, was, that God is so good that He will not punish men for indulging those natural appetites which He has Himself implanted in them; nor be displeased with them for committing a few sins, which can do Him no harm, but which are necessary to their present happiness. Wherefore, to show the impiety and falsehood of that doctrine, and to secure the disciples from being seduced by it, the Apostle Jude wrote this Epistle, in which, by facts recorded in Scripture, he proved that, as God had already punished the angels who sinned, notwithstanding their dignity, and the antediluvians, notwithstanding their number, so He will at length most assuredly punish all obstinate sinners in the severest manner.—See Macknight.

QUESTIONS SUGGESTING SOME HINTS AS TO THE IMPROVEMENT WHICH MAY BE DERIVED FROM THE EPISTLES.

I. Questions in reference to the Writers.

1. Who wrote this Epistle?
2. Give some account of his history.
3. What illustration of his character is afforded by this Epistle? What illustration can you mention of his humility, his zeal, his love to God, or his feelings towards those whom he addresses?
4. Was there any thing remarkable in his circumstances at the time he wrote this Epistle?

II. Questions in reference to those to whom the Epistle is addressed.

If to the members of a Church,

1. Can you give any account of their character and manners before they embraced Christianity?
2. Is this alluded to in this Epistle?

^r Matt. xiii. 55.

3. Is there any account in the Acts of the Apostles of the planting of that Church?

4. What appears from the Epistle to have been the state of that Church when the Epistle was written?

- (1.) Are its members commended, and for what?
- (2.) Are they blamed, and for what?
- (3.) Are they cautioned or warned of any danger?
- (4.) Is there any allusion to false teachers?

III. *Questions in reference to the Epistle.*

1. At what time was it written?
2. At what place?
3. What was the occasion of its being written?
4. What are its leading topics?

Referring to page 332, "General Remarks on the Epistles," the following questions are suggested:—

IV. *What views are given in this Epistle concerning God?*

1. The nature of God :
 - (1.) What proofs of the Deity of Christ?
 - (2.) What of the Deity of the Holy Ghost?
2. The attributes of God :
 - (1.) What illustrations or declarations of his holiness?
 - (2.) his justice?
 - (3.) his goodness?
 - (4.) his mercy?
 - (5.) his long-suffering?
 - (6.) his faithfulness?
 - (7.) his grace?

V. *What light is thrown by this Epistle on the great work of man's redemption,*

1. In reference to the work of Christ as our Mediator :
 - (1.) Is there any reference in this Epistle to what Christ has done, is doing, or will do, to save sinners?
 - (2.) Is there any reference to our Lord's death, his resurrection, his present state, or his coming again to judge the world?
2. In reference to the office of the Holy Ghost :
 - (1.) Is the Holy Spirit mentioned in this Epistle?
 - (2.) Is there any notice of the blessings we are to expect from Him?
 - (3.) Is there any notice of the relation in which true Christians stand towards Him?

3. Does this Epistle throw any light on the means by which we become individually partakers of this salvation?

VI. *What is said in this Epistle of the character, condition, and duties of man?*

1. Is there any thing said of man's character by nature since sin entered?

2. Is any thing said of his state by nature? Any reference to the evil of sin, and the punishment of sinners in another world?

3. Is there any reference in this Epistle to the change by grace, produced in the character and condition of men when they become Christians? Any reference to the privileges of Christians?

4. Is there any reference to the dispositions and conduct which Christians should cultivate,

(1.) Towards God the Father?

(2.) — the Lord Jesus Christ?

(3.) — the Holy Spirit?

(4.) — their fellow-Christians?

(5.) — enemies, persecutors?

(6.) — the world?

(7.) In affliction, prosperity, &c.?

5. Are relative duties enforced in this Epistle; as, for instance, those between husbands and wives, children and parents, servants and masters, ministers and people, or subjects and rulers?

6. By what motives are these relative duties enforced?

7. Are the same duties enforced in any other Epistle?

8. Compare the accounts.

VII. *General topics.*

1. Is there any prophecy in this Epistle?

2. Is there any allusion to the Old Testament, to any prophecy, type, promise, precept, or threatening; or to any person mentioned in the Old Testament?

3. Is there any reference to the Law, or the Gospel, to Angels, to Satan, the influence he exerts over the wicked, and how we are to resist his temptations? Any reference to Baptism, or the Lord's Supper; to temptation, to particular vices, as drunkenness, covetousness; to particular virtues, as diligence, honesty, &c.?

4. Give some examples, either from the Old or New Testament, of persons practising any of the duties enjoined in this Epistle, as repentance, faith, prayer, watchfulness, humility, forgiveness of injuries, &c.

5. Give also some examples of persons committing any of the sins referred to in this Epistle.

6. Is there any reference to the subject of death, and under what figures is it alluded to?

7. Is there any reference to the resurrection of the body, to the influence which the day of judgment and the hope of heaven ought to have on your present conduct?

8. Are there any prayers in this Epistle, and can you learn from them for what you ought to pray?

CHAPTER VIII.

THE REVELATION OF ST. JOHN.

It has been remarked by Sir Isaac Newton, that no book of the New Testament has been so strongly attested, or commented upon so early as this: nor does any other equal it in the dignity and sublimity of its composition.—The Revelation contained in it was made by our Blessed Lord to John, during his exile in the isle of Patmos, and was published not long before his death, about the year 97. The book may be divided into three parts. Ch. i. contains John's vision of Christ in glory; ch. ii. iii. the seven letters addressed by our Lord to the seven Churches of Asia Minor. The remainder of the book, after presenting us (ch. iv.) with a description of the Lamb on the throne, and bringing to our notice the book of God's decrees as to future events, is occupied in showing the contents of that book, the subject of which is the state of the Church, from the close of the sacred volume till the consummation of all things: and thus it forms a suitable continuation to the prophecies of Daniel.

The Epistles to the seven Churches supply the most important instruction to the universal Church in every age, and may be profitably read by every Christian. As general hints for the profitable reading of this invaluable book, which, as ages roll on, affords to each succeeding generation a brighter evidence of the Divine origin of our holy religion, and of the gracious intentions of God to man, the following remarks from Lowth are extremely valuable.

“An ordinary reader may receive great edification from those noble hymns offered up to God and Christ^a; and may likewise discover many useful truths, such as the adoration of the one Supreme God, in opposition to all creature worship^b; the relying upon the merits of Christ only for pardon, sanctification, and salvation^c; and that we ought to wait patiently for Christ's appearing and his

^a Rev. iv. 8—11; v. 8—13;
vii. 12; xv. 3, 4.

^b Rev. ix. 20; xiv. 7; xxi. 8;
xxii. 15.

^c Rev. v. 9; vii. 14; xii. 11.

kingdom, and, in an earnest expectation of it, to continue stedfast in the profession of the true faith and practice of sincere holiness, notwithstanding all the sufferings which may attend a good conscience^d. All may learn those marks and characters of Antichrist, which it most nearly concerns us to take notice of, viz. pride, ambition, and affectation of worldly pomp and grandeur^e; a cruel and persecuting spirit^f, seeking to reduce others rather by force and compulsion than by reason and argument; the love of ease and softness, and a careless and luxurious life^g; and that whosoever are guilty of these things, are so departed from the true spirit of Christianity: and surely he that takes warning from the plain and frequent admonitions of this book to avoid these sins, has not wholly lost his labours in reading it; and withal, has entitled himself to the blessings pronounced upon those who keep its sayings^h."

To those who would presumptuously intrude into the things which are secret and belong to God, the remark of Sir Isaac Newton, already alluded to, page 86, suggests a wholesome caution. To those who would trifle with the prophetic parts of this book, because of their mystery, the following considerations may not be without value:—"No prophecies in the Revelation can be more clouded with obscurity, than that a child should be born of a pure virgin,—that a mortal should not see corruption,—that a person despised and numbered among malefactors should be established for ever on the throne of David. Yet still the pious Jew preserved his faith entire, amidst all these wonderful, and, in appearance, contradictory intimations. He looked into the holy books in which they were contained with reverence, and with an eye of patient expectation 'waited for the consolation of Israel.' We in the same manner look up to these prophecies of the Apocalypse for the full consummation of the great scheme of the Gospel, when Christianity shall finally prevail over all the corruptions of the world, and be universally established in its

^d Rev. xiii. 10; xiv. 12, 13;
xvi. 15.

^e Rev. xiii. 7; xviii. 4.

^f Rev. ix. 21; xi. 7; xiii. 7—17;
xvi. 6; xviii. 20—24; xix. 2.

^g Rev. iii. 2; xviii. 3—14.

^h Rev. i. 3.

utmost purity.”—*Gilpin’s Exposition of the New Testament*, vol. ii. p. 428.

The conclusion of this book is deeply solemn, characteristic of the Gospel, as distinct from the Law (ch. xxii. 21, with Malachi iv. 6, and John i. 17), and expressive of the design of the whole Bible, which is to point to Christ as the Alpha and Omega, the beginning and the end, the first and the lastⁱ, and to invite mankind to take of the water of life freely offered through Him—that life of which the in-dwelling of his Spirit in our heart is the pledge^k: for without holiness no man shall see the Lord^l.

Let these books, then, of the Holy Scriptures, be much in our hands, in our eyes, in our ears, in our mouths, but most of all in our hearts. For the Scripture of God is the heavenly meat of our souls; the hearing and keeping of it maketh us blessed, sanctifieth us, and maketh us holy: it turneth our souls; it is a light-lantern to our feet; it is a sure, stedfast, and everlasting instrument of salvation; it giveth wisdom to the humble and lowly heart; it comforteth, maketh glad, cheereth, and cherisheth our conscience; it is a more excellent jewel or treasure than any gold or precious stone: it is more sweet than honey and the honeycomb; it is called the best part, which Mary did choose, for it hath in it everlasting comfort.—*Homily, Exhortation to Reading the Scripture.*

ⁱ Rev. xxii. 13.

^k Rev. xxii. 17. John vii. 37—39. Gal. v. 22, 23.

^l Rev. xxi. 27.

CHRONOLOGICAL INDEX

TO

THE BIBLE,

REFERRING TO THE PRINCIPAL EVENTS RECORDED IN THE HOLY
SCRIPTURES, AND INCLUDING A PERIOD OF 4104 YEARS.

N. B. The true date of the birth of our Lord is four years earlier than the
common era A.D.

FIRST PERIOD.—*From the Creation to the Flood, 1656 years.*

B.C.	Scripture.	Contents.
4004	Gen. i.—iii.	The Creation. Man formed in the image of God, holy and happy—his fall—promise of a Saviour. (Eph. iv. 24; 1 John iii. 8.)
3875	—iv. 8	Cain murders Abel. (1 John iii. 12. 15.)
3874	—iv. 25.....	Seth born to take the place of Abel.
3769	—iv. 26.....	Enos born—"Then began men to call on the name of the Lord."
3382	—v. 18	Enoch born, the seventh from Adam. (Jude 14.)
3317	—v. 21	Methuselah, the son of Enoch, born.
3074	—v. 5.....	Adam dieth, aged 930 years.
3017	—v. 23, 24	Enoch, in the 365th year of his age, taken up to God. (Heb. xi. 5.)
2948	—v. 28, 29	Noah born.
2469	—vi. 3	The flood threatened—Noah commanded to preach repentance, and build the ark. (1 Pet. iii. 20; 2 Pet. ii. 5; Heb. xi. 7.)
2349	—v. 27	Methuselah dies, aged 969 years, and the flood comes in the 600th year of Noah's age. (Matt. xxiv. 37.)
	—vii. 11	

SECOND PERIOD.—*From the Flood to the Calling of Abraham.*

2348	Gen. viii. 18, &c.	Noah leaves the ark—offers sacrifice—God's covenant with him.
	—ix.	
2234	—x.	About this time Nimrod begins to exalt himself, by laying the foundation of the Assyrian or Babylonian monarchy—Nineveh and Babel are built, and mankind are dispersed by the confusion of their language.
	—xi.	
2188	.....	Mizraim, the grandson of Ham, is supposed at this time to have led colonies into Egypt, and to have laid the foundation of a kingdom which lasted 1663 years; whence Egypt is called the land of Ham, and the Egyptian Pharaohs boasted themselves to be the sons of ancient kings. (Ps. cv. 23; Isa. xix. 11.)
1998	Gen. ix. 28, 29 ...	Noah dies, aged 950 years, 350 years after the flood.
1996	—xi. 32.....	Abram born, the youngest son of Terah, then 130 years old. (Compare Gen. xi. 32, with Gen. xii. 4; Acts vii. 4.)

A.C.	Scripture.	Contents.
1921	Gen. xii.	Abram, at God's command, leaves Haran, and comes to Canaan, which is promised to his seed; as also, that in that seed should all the nations of the earth be blessed. (Heb. xi. 9.)
1923	Gen. xii. 10, to xiii. 1—4 Gal. iii. 17..... Exod. xii. 40...	Abram driven by famine from Canaan to Egypt; his sin there, and return to Bethel. From his first coming into Egypt to the departure of the children of Israel out of it are reckoned 430 years.
THIRD PERIOD.—From the Call of Abraham to the Entrance of the Israelites into Canaan.		
1920	Gen. xiii.	Lot leaves Abram to dwell near Sodom.
1913	— xiv.	The rescue of Lot from Chedorlaomer—yet his return to Sodom—Abram's interview with Melchisedek.
1910	— xvi.	Ishmael born.
1897	— xvii. 5; xix. 24—28.	God makes a covenant with Abram—changes his name—promises Isaac—ordains circumcision as the seal of this covenant. (Rom. iv. 11.)—Sodom and Gomorrah destroyed.—The Dead Sea the monument thereof to this day.
1896	— xxi.	Isaac born 25 years after God's promise to Abraham.
1892	— xxi. 9.....	Hagar the bondwoman, and her son Ishmael, cast out. (Gal. iv. 22—30.)
1871	— xxii.	God tempteth Abraham to offer Isaac.
1859	— xxiii.	Sarah dies at Hebron in Canaan, in the 127th year of her age.
1846	— xi. 10, 11	Shem, the son of Noah, dies.
1837	— xxv. 24.....	Esau and Jacob born twenty years after their father Isaac's marriage.
1821	— xxv. 7, 8	Abraham dies, aged 175 years.
1817	— xi. 17.....	Heber, the fifth from Noah, dies; from him Abraham and his posterity were called Hebrews. (Gen. xiv. 13.)
1760	— xxviii. 10	Jacob, having obtained the blessing, flees to Mesopotamia, to his uncle Laban.
1753 to 1732 1729	— xxix. xxx. { — xxxvii.	The twelve sons of Jacob born—Reuben, Simeon, Levi, Judah, Dan, Naphtali, Gad, Asher, Issachar, Zebulun, Joseph, and Benjamin.
1716	— xxxv. 28	Joseph sold to the Midianites, aged 17 years, and carried into Egypt.
1715	— xli. 25	Isaac dies, and is buried by his sons Jacob and Esau.
1706	— xli.	Joseph interprets Pharaoh's two dreams, gives Pharaoh counsel, and is made governor of Egypt.
1689	— xli.	Jacob goes with his family into Egypt in the third year of the famine, and the 130th year of his age.
1635	— xlviii.; — xlix.; Heb. xi. 21; Gen. i. 7—13... { Heb. xi. 22	Jacob adopts Ephraim and Manasseh, the two sons of Joseph, blesses them and all his sons, prophesies the descent of the Messiah from Judah, and dies, aged 147 years. He is with great pomp carried into Canaan, and buried in the sepulchre of his father.
1619	Exod. i.	Joseph on his death-bed prophesies to his brethren their return to Canaan, takes an oath of them to carry his bones out of Egypt, and dies, aged 110 years.
1577	.....	Levi dies, the grandfather of Aaron and Moses.
1574	— vi. 20.....	Bondage of the children of Israel begins.
1571	— ii.	Aaron born.
1531	.....	Moses born—adopted by Pharaoh's daughter.
1491	— iii.—xiv.	Moses' flight from Egypt (Heb. xi.) into Midian. (Acts vii. 23.)
		Moses returns to Egypt, having received God's commission to deliver the Israelites—The Plagues are sent—The Passover instituted—Their passage through the Red Sea, and entrance into the wilderness, under the guidance of the pillar.

B.C.	Scripture.	Contents.
1490	Exod. xx.—xl....	The Law given—God's covenant with them made—broken by them, renewed by God—The Tabernacle set up, and the Israelites condemned to wander forty years in the wilderness for their rebellion. (Lev. i.—xxvi.; Num. i.—xiv.)
1451	Deut. xxxiv.....	Moses dies, aged 120. Here ends the Pentateuch.

FOURTH PERIOD.—*From the Entrance of the Israelites into Canaan to the Building of the Temple.*

1450	Josh.	The Israelites, under Joshua, pass over Jordan. The gradual conquest of Canaan.
1443	— xxiii. xxiv. ...	Joshua dies, aged 110 years.
1413	Judg. xvii.—xxi.	Anarchy and confusion in the succeeding generation. Idolatry of the tribe of Dan; and the tribe of Benjamin nearly destroyed. The Israelites delivered up to captivity.
1394	—	Othniel, son-in-law of Joshua, delivers them, and after him various other judges, of whom Barak, Gideon, Jephthah, and Samson, are particularly noticed. (Heb. xi.)
1116	1 Sam. iv.	The ark taken by the Philistines. Eli's death. Judicature of Samuel.
1095	— viii.—x.....	Saul anointed king by Samuel.
1085	— xvii. 12	David born at Bethlehem.
1063	— xvi. 13	David anointed king, God having rejected Saul for disobedience.
1055	— xxxi.	Saul kills himself in despair. David acknowledged king of Judah.
1048	2 Sam. v.	David anointed king over all Israel, after a civil war of seven years.
1035	— xi.	David's great sin.
1023	— xv.—xviii. ...	Absalom's rebellion and death.
1015	1 Kings i. ii.....	David's death. Solomon succeeds him.
1004	— vi. vii.	Solomon's temple, which had been seven years and a half in building, is dedicated with great solemnity and joy, God giving a visible sign of his favour.
	2 Chron. v.—vii.	

FIFTH PERIOD.—*From the Dedication of the Temple to the Babylonian Captivity.*

Most of the dates of this period will be found in the Table of the Kings of Israel and Judah, see page 245.

622	Nahum i.—iii. ...	Nineveh is taken and desolated by the Medes and Chaldeans.
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SIXTH PERIOD.—*From the Babylonian Captivity till the Coming of Christ.*

569	Dan. iv. 29—33...	Nebuchadnezzar deprived of reason for his pride.
538	— v.....	Babylon taken by Cyrus, and the empire translated to the Medes and Persians, as foretold by the prophets, Isa. xlii.; Hab. ii.; Jer. xxv. 12; l. li. With the fall of Babylon ends the Assyrian, or <i>First Universal Empire</i> .
	— v. 31	
	— ii. 36—46 }	
	— vii. 5..... }	
		For the dates between this period and the close of the Old Testament history, see p. 252.

B.C.	Scripture.	Contents.
332	Sanballat builds a temple on Mount Gerizim, see John iv. 20.
332	Alexander the Great visits Jerusalem peaceably, is shown the prophecy of Daniel respecting himself. (Dan. viii. 7; xi. 13.)
330	Alexander overthrows the Persians, <i>i. e.</i> the <i>Second Universal Empire</i> , and establishes the <i>Third Universal Empire</i> , that of the Macedonian or Grecian. (Dan. xi. 39; vii. 6; xi.)
323	Alexander, having reigned six years and ten months, dies; his army and dominion are divided among his captains. Antigonius makes himself governor of Asia; Seleucus of Babylon and the bordering nations; Lysimachus has the Hellespont; Cassander, Macedon; and Ptolemeus, the son of Lagus, gets Egypt. (Dan. ii. 39; viii. 8; xi. 4, &c.)
277	The Old Testament translated out of the original Hebrew into the Greek language.
170	Antiochus Epiphanes' cruel treatment of the Jews.
165	Judas Maccabeus' restoration of the daily sacrifice, and purification of the temple.
63	Jerusalem taken by the Romans under Pompey. The Roman, or <i>Fourth Universal Empire</i> .
40	Herod the Great, an Idumean, declared king of the Jews, by the Romans.
	Matt. ii. Luke ii.	Jesus Christ, the Saviour of the world, born at Bethlehem, four years earlier than the common reckoning, Anno Domini.

SEVENTH PERIOD.—*From the Birth of Christ to the Temptation.* (a)

B.C.	Place.	Scripture.	Contents.
	.....	Mark i. 1; Luke i. 1.	General Preface.
	.....	John i. 1—19	The Divinity, Humanity, and Office of Christ.
6	Jerusalem ..	Luke i. 5—26	Promise of the birth of John the Baptist.
5	Nazareth	Luke i. 26—39	The Annunciation.
—	Hebron	Luke i. 39—57	Interview between Mary and Elisabeth.
—	Hebron	Luke i. 57, to the end.	The Birth and Naming of John the Baptist.
—	Nazareth	Matt. i. 18, to the end.	An Angel appears to Joseph.
—	Bethlehem ..	Luke ii. 1—8	Birth of Christ.
—	.....	Matt. i. 1; Luke iii. 23, to the end; Matt. i. 2—18.	The Genealogies of Christ.
—	Fields near Bethlehem ..	Luke ii. 8—21	The Angels appear unto the Shepherds.

(a) This and the following periods are slightly abridged from Townsend's Harmony of the New Testament.

B.C.	Place.	Scripture.	Contents.
5	Temple of Jerusalem.	Luke ii. 21	The Circumcision.
—	Temple of Jerusalem.	Luke ii. 22—40.....	The Purification—Presentation of Christ in the Temple, where He is acknowledged by Simeon and Anna.
—	Bethlehem..	Matt. ii. 1—13	The Offering of the Magi.
—	.....	Matt. ii. 13—15 ...	The Flight into Egypt.
—	Bethlehem..	Matt. ii. 16—18 ...	Slaughter of the Innocents.
3	.....	Matt. ii. 19, to the end; Luke ii. 39.	Joseph returns from Egypt to Nazareth.
A.D.	Jerusalem ...	Luke ii. 41, to the end.	History of Christ at the age of twelve years.
—	The Wilderness of Judea.	Matt. iii. 1—13; Mark i. 2—9; Luke iii. 1—19.	Commencement of the Ministry of John the Baptist.
26	Bethabara, where the ark had rested, on its passage from the Wilderness into Canaan.	Matt. iii. 13, to the end; Mark i. 9, 10, 11; Luke iii. 21, 22, and part of 23.	The Baptism of Christ.
—	The Wilderness.	Matt. iv. 1—12; Mark i. 12, 13; Luke iv. 1—13.	The Temptation of Christ.

EIGHTH PERIOD.—*From the Temptation of Christ to the Commencement of his more public Ministry after the Imprisonment of John.*

26	Bethabara ...	John i. 19—35	Farther testimony of John the Baptist.
—	Bethabara, road to Galilee.	John i. 35, to the end.	Christ obtains his first disciples from John.
27	Cana in Galilee.	John ii. 1—12	Marriage at Cana in Galilee.
—	Capernaum	John ii. 12.....	Christ goes down to Capernaum, and continues there some short time.
—	Jerusalem ...	John ii. 13, to the end.	The Buyers and Sellers driven from the Temple.
—	Jerusalem ...	John iii. 1—22.....	Conversation of Christ with Nicodemus.
—	Judea	John iii. 22, to the end.	John's last testimony to Christ.
—	.....	Matt. xiv. 3—5; Mark vi. 17—21; Luke iii. 19, 20.	Imprisonment of John the Baptist.

NINTH PERIOD.—*From the Commencement of the more public Ministry of Christ to the Mission of the Twelve Apostles.*

27	Judea	Matt. iv. 12—18; Mark i. 14, 15; Luke iv. 14, 15.	General Introduction to the History of Christ's more public Ministry.
—	Samaria	John iv. 1—43	Christ's Conversation with the Woman of Samaria.
—	Cana in Galilee.	John iv. 43, to the end.	Second Miracle at Cana in Galilee.
—	Nazareth ...	Luke iv. 16—31 ...	First public preaching of Christ in the Synagogue at Nazareth, and his danger there.
—	Capernaum	Luke iv. 31, 32.....	Christ sojourns at Capernaum.

A.D.	Place.	Scripture.	Contents.
27	Sea of Galilee	Matt. iv. 18-23; Mark i. 16-21; Luke v. 1-12.	The miraculous Draught of Fishes, and the calling of Andrew and Peter, James and John.
—	Capernaum	Mark i. 21-29; Luke iv. 33-38.	The Demoniac healed.
—	Capernaum	Matt. viii. 14, 15; Mark i. 29-31; Luke iv. 38, 39.	Peter's Mother-in-law cured of a Fever.
—	Galilee	Matt. iv. 23, 24, 25; viii. 16, 17; Mark i. 32-40; Luke iv. 40, to the end.	Christ teaches and performs Miracles and Cures throughout Galilee.
—	Galilee	Matt. viii. 2-5; Mark i. 40, to the end; Luke v. 12-15.	Christ cures a Leper.
—	Capernaum	Matt. ix. 2-9; Mark ii. 1-13; Luke v. 17-27.	The Paralytic cured, and the Power of Christ to forgive sins asserted.
—	Capernaum	Matt. ix. 9; Mark ii. 13, 14; Luke v. 27, 28.	The calling of Matthew.
—	Jerusalem ...	John v. 1-16	The infirm man healed at the Pool of Bethesda.
—	Jerusalem ...	John v. 16, to the end.	Christ vindicates the Miracle, and asserts the dignity of his Office.
—	In a progress	Matt. xii. 1-9; Mark ii. 23, to the end; Luke vi. 1-6.	Christ defends his Disciples for plucking the ears of corn on the Sabbath Day.
—	In a progress	Matt. xii. 9-15; Mark iii. 1-7; Luke vi. 6-12.	Christ heals the withered hand.
—	.....	Matt. xii. 15-22; Mark iii. 7-13.	Christ is followed by great Multitudes, whose Diseases He heals.
—	Galilee	Mark iii. 13-19; Luke vi. 12-20.	Preparation for the Sermon on the Mount — Election of the Twelve Apostles.
—	Galilee	Matt. v. vi. vii. and viii. 1; Luke vi. 20, to the end; xi. 33-37.	The Sermon on the Mount.
—	Capernaum	Matt. viii. 5-14; Luke vii. 1-11.	The Centurion's Servant healed.
—	Nain	Luke vii. 11-19.....	The Widow of Nain's Son is raised to life.
—	On a tour ...	Matt. xi. 2-7; Luke vii. 19-24.	Message of John, who was still in Prison, to Christ.
—	.....	Matt. xi. 7-16; Luke vii. 24-31.	Christ's testimony concerning John.
—	.....	Matt. xi. 16-25; Luke vii. 31-36.	Christ reproaches the Jews for their Impenitence and Insensibility.
—	.....	Matt. xi. 25, to the end.	Christ invites all to come to Him.
—	.....	Luke vii. 36, to the end.	Christ forgives the sins of a female Penitent, at the house of a Pharisee.
—	.....	Luke viii. 1, 2, 3 ...	Christ preaches again throughout Galilee.
—	Capernaum	Matt. xii. 22-46; Mark iii. part of ver. 19-31; Luke xi. 14-33.	Christ cures a Demoniac—Conduct of the Scribes and Pharisees.
—	.....	Matt. xii. 46, to the end; Mark iii. 31, to the end; Luke viii. 19-21.	Christ declares his faithful Disciples to be his real kindred.
—	Sea of Galilee	Matt. xiii. 1-10; Mark iv. 1-10; Luke viii. 4-9.	Parable of the Sower.

A.D.	Place.	Scripture.	Contents.
27	.....	Matt. xiii. 10-18; Mark iv. 10, 11, 12; Luke viii. part of 9, 10.	Reasons for teaching by Parables.
—	.....	Matt. xiii. 18-24; Mark iv. 13-24; Luke viii. part of ver. 9, and 11-16.	Explanation of the Parable of the Sower.
—	.....	Mark iv. 24, 25; Luke viii. 18.	Christ directs his Hearers to practise what they hear.
—	.....	Matt. xiii. 24-54; Mark iv. 26-35.	Various Parables descriptive of Christ's kingdom.
—	.....	Matt. viii. 18-28; Mark iv. part of ver. 35, to the end; Luke viii. 22-26.	Christ crosses the Sea of Galilee, and calms the Tempest.
—	Gadara	Matt. viii. 28, to the end; Mark v. 1-21; Luke viii. 26-40.	Christ heals the Gadarene Demoniac.
—	Capernaum	Matt. ix. 10-18; Mark ii. 15-23; Luke v. 29, to the end.	Christ dines with Matthew.
—	.....	Matt. ix. 18-27; Mark v. 21, to the end; Luke viii. 40, to the end.	Jairus' Daughter is healed, and the infirm Woman.
—	On a Tour...	Matt. ix. 27-32. Matt. ix. 32, 33, 34.	Christ restores two Blind Men to Sight. Christ casts out a Dumb Spirit.
—	Nazareth	Matt. xiii. 54, to the end; Mark vi. 1-7.	Christ returns to Nazareth, and is again ill-treated there.
28	Galilee	Matt. ix. 35, to the end.	Christ preaches again throughout Galilee.

TENTH PERIOD.—*From the Mission of the Twelve Apostles to the Mission of the Seventy.*

28	On a Pro- gress, pro- bably in Galilee.	Matt. x. and xi. 1; Mark vi. 7-14; Luke ix. 1-7.	Christ's Commission to the Twelve Apos- tles.
—	.....	Matt. xiv. 1, 2, and 6-13; Mark vi. 14, 15, 16, and 21-30; Luke ix. 7, 8, 9.	Death of John the Baptist—Herod desires to see Christ.
—	Bethsaida ...	Matt. xiv. 13, 14; Mark vi. 30-35; Luke ix. 10, 11; John vi. 1, 2.	The Twelve return, and Christ retires with them to the Desert of Bethsaida.
—	On the way to Jerusa- lem.	Matt. xiv. 15-22; Mark vi. 35-45; Luke ix. 12-18; John vi. 3-15.	Five thousand are fed miraculously.
—	Probably near Jern- salem.	Matt. xiv. 22, 23; Mark vi. 45, 46; John vi. 15.	Christ sends the Multitude away, and prays alone.
—	Galilee	Matt. xiv. 24-34; Mark vi. 47-53; John vi. 16-22.	Christ walks on the Sea to his Disciples, who are overtaken by a storm.
—	.....	Matt. xiv. 34, 35, 36; Mark vi. 53, to the end.	Christ heals many people.

A. D.	Place.	Scripture.	Contents.
28	Capernaum	John vi. 22. to the end; vii. 1.	Christ teaches in the Synagogue of Capernaum—Conversation with his Disciples.
—	.....	Matt. xv. 1-21; Mark vii. 1-24.	Christ converses with the Scribes and Pharisees on the Jewish Traditions.
—	Tyre	Matt. xv. 21-29; Mark vii. 24-31.	Christ heals the Daughter of the Canaanite or Syro-Phœnician Woman.
—	Decapolis ...	Matt. xv. 29, 30, 31; Mark vii. 31, to the end.	Christ goes through Decapolis, healing and teaching.
—	On a Mount by the Sea of Galilee.	Matt. xv. 32, to the end; Mark viii. 1-11.	Four thousand men are fed miraculously.
—	Magdala.....	Matt. xvi. 1-13; Mark viii. 11-14.	The Pharisees require other signs—Christ charges them with Hypocrisy.
—	Bethsaida ...	Mark viii. 22-27 ...	Christ heals a Blind Man.
—	Cæsarea-Philippi.	Matt. xvii. 13-21; Mark viii. 27-31; Luke ix. 18-22.	Peter confesses Christ to be the Messiah.
—	Galilee	Matt. xvi. 21, to the end; Mark viii. 31, to the end; Mark ix. 1; Luke ix. 22-28.	Christ astonishes the Disciples, by declaring the necessity of his Death and Resurrection.
—	.....	Matt. xvii. 1-14; Mark ix. 2-14; Luke ix. 28-37.	The Transfiguration of Christ.
—	.....	Matt. xvii. 14-22; Mark ix. 14-30; Luke ix. 37-43.	The Deaf and Dumb Spirit cast out.
—	.....	Matt. xvii. 22, 23; Mark ix. 30-33; Luke ix. 43-46.	Christ again foretels his Death and Resurrection.
—	Capernaum	Matt. xvii. 24, to the end.	Christ works a miracle to pay the Half-shekel for the Temple Service.
—	.....	Matt. xviii.; Mark ix. 33, to the end; Luke ix. 46-51.	The Disciples contend for superiority.

ELEVENTH PERIOD.—*From the Mission of the Seventy Disciples to the Triumphant Entry of Christ into Jerusalem, six days before the Crucifixion.*

28	Galilee	Luke x. 1-17.....	The Mission of the Seventy.
—	Jerusalem ...	Matt. xix. 1, 2; Mark x. 1; John vii. 2-11.	Christ goes up to the Feast of Tabernacles.
—	.....	John vii. 11, to the end; John viii. 1.	Agitation of the public mind at Jerusalem concerning Christ.
—	.....	John viii. 2-12	Conduct of Christ to the Adulteress and her Accusers.
—	.....	John viii. 12-21 ...	Christ declares Himself to be the Son of God.
—	.....	John viii. 21, to the end.	Christ foretels the manner of his Death.
—	Near Jerusalem.	Luke x. 17-25	The Seventy return with joy.
—	On a Tour...	Luke x. 25-29	Christ directs the Lawyer how he may attain Eternal Life.
—	.....	Luke x. 29-38	The Parable of the Good Samaritan.
—	.....	Luke x. 38, to the end.	Christ in the House of Martha.
—	.....	Luke xi. 1-14	Christ teaches his Disciples to pray.
—	.....	Luke xi. 37, to the end.	Christ reproves the Pharisees and Lawyers.

A.D.	Place.	Scripture.	Contents.
23	On a Tour...	Luke xii. 1-13	Christ cautions his Disciples against Hypocrisy.
—	Luke xii. 13, 14 ...	Christ refuses to act as a judge.
—	Luke xii. 15-34.....	Christ cautions the Multitude against Worldly-mindedness.
—	Luke xii. 35, to the end; and Luke xiii. 1-10.	Christ exhorts to Watchfulness, Fidelity, and Repentance.
—	Luke xiii. 10-18	Christ cures an infirm Woman in the Synagogue.
—	Luke xiii. 18-23	Christ begins his Journey towards Jerusalem, to be present at the Feast of the Dedication.
—	Jerusalem ...	John ix. 1-35	Christ restores to Sight a Blind Man, who is summoned before the Sanhedrim.
—	John ix. 35, to the end; John x. 1-22.	Christ declares that He is the true Shepherd.
—	John x. 22-39	Christ publicly asserts his Divinity.
—	John x. 39, to the end.	In consequence of the opposition of the Jews, Christ retires beyond Jordan.
—	Near Jerusalem.	Luke xiii. 23, to the end.	Christ, leaving the City, laments over Jerusalem.
—	Luke xiv. 1-25.....	Christ dines with a Pharisee—Parable of the Great Supper.
—	On a Tour...	Luke xiv. 25, to the end.	Christ's Disciples must forsake the World.
—	Luke xv. 1-11	Parables of the lost Sheep, and of the lost piece of Silver.
—	Luke xv. 11, to the end.	Parable of the Prodigal Son.
—	Luke xvi. 1-14	Parable of the Unjust Steward.
—	Luke xvi. 14-18 ...	Christ reproves the Pharisees.
—	Matt. xix. 3-13; Mark x. 2-13; Luke xvi. 18.	Christ answers the question concerning Marriage and Divorce.
—	Matt. xix. 13, 14, 15; Mark x. 13-17; Luke xviii. 15, 16, 17.	Christ receives and blesses little Children.
—	Luke xvi. 19, to the end.	Parable of the Rich Man and Lazarus.
—	Luke xvii. 1-11	On Forgiveness of Injuries.
—	Luke ix. 51, to the end; xvii. 11.	Christ journeys towards Jerusalem.
—	Luke xvii. 12-20 ...	Christ heals ten Lepers.
—	Luke xvii. 20, to the end.	Christ declares the lowliness of his Kingdom, and the sudden destruction of Jerusalem.
—	Luke xviii. 1-9.....	Christ teaches the true Nature of Prayer.
—	Luke xviii. 9-15.	Parable of the Pharisee and Publican.
—	Matt. xix. 16, to the end; Mark x. 17-32; Luke xviii. 18-31.	From the Conduct of the young Ruler, Christ cautions his Disciples on the Danger of Wealth.
—	Matt. xx. 1-17	Parable of the Labourers in the Vineyard.
—	John xi. 1-17	Christ is informed of the Sickness of Lazarus.
29	Matt. xx. 17, 18, 19; Mark x. 32, 33, 34; Luke xviii. 31-35.	Christ again predicts his Sufferings and Death.
—	On the way to Bethany.	Matt. xx. 20-29; Mark x. 35-46.	Ambition of the Sons of Zebedee. .

A.D.	Place.	Scripture.	Contents.
29	Jericho	Matt. xx. 29, to the end; Mark x. 46, to the end; Luke xviii. 35, to the end.	Two Blind Men healed.
—	.....	Luke xix. 1-29.....	Conversion of Zacchæus, and the Parable of the Pounds.
—	Bethany.....	John xi. 17-47	The Resurrection of Lazarus.
—	Jerusalem ...	John xi. 47, 48.....	The Sanhedrim assemble to deliberate concerning the Resurrection of Lazarus.
—	.....	John xi. 49-53	Caiaaphas prophesies.
—	.....	John xi. 53	The Sanhedrim resolve to put Christ to death.
—	Ephraim ...	John xi. 54	Christ retires to Ephraim, or Ephrata.
—	Jerusalem ...	John xi. 55, to the end.	State of the public mind at Jerusalem immediately before the last Passover at which Christ attended.
—	Bethany.....	Matt. xxvi. 6-14; Mark xiv. 3-10; John xii. 1-12.	Christ comes to Bethany, where He is anointed by Mary.
—	.....	Matt. xxi. 1-8. Mark xi. 1-8; Luke xix. 29-36; John xii. 12-19.	Christ prepares to enter Jerusalem.

TWELFTH PERIOD.—From Christ's triumphant Entry into Jerusalem to his Apprehension.—Sunday, the fifth day before the last Passover.

29	Jerusalem ...	Matt. xxi. 8, 9; Mark xi. 8, 9, 10; Luke xix. 36-41; John xii. 19.	The People meet Christ with Hosannahs —Christ approaches Jerusalem.
—	.....	Luke xix. 41-45 ...	Christ's Lamentation over Jerusalem, and the Prophecy of its Destruction.
—	.....	Matt. xxi. 10-14; Mark xi. part of ver. 11; Luke xix. 45, 46.	Christ, on entering the City, casts the Buyers and Sellers out of the Temple.
—	.....	Matt. xxi. 14, 15, 16.	Christ heals the Sick in the Temple, and reproves the Chief Priests.
—	.....	John xii. 20-44.....	Some Greeks at Jerusalem desire to see Christ—The Voice from Heaven.
—	.....	John xii. 44, to the end.	Christ declares the object of his Mission.
—	Bethany.....	Matt. xxi. 17; Mark xi. part of ver. 11.	Christ leaves the City in the Evening, and goes to Bethany.
—	Jerusalem ...	Matt. xxi. 18, 19; Mark xi. 12, 13, 14.	Monday—Fourth day before the Passover —Christ, entering Jerusalem again, curses the barren Fig-tree.
—	.....	Mark xi. 15, 16, 17.	Christ again casts the Buyers and Sellers out of the Temple.
—	.....	Mark xi. 18; Luke xix. 47, 48.	The Scribes and Chief Priests seek to destroy Christ.
—	.....	Mark xi. 19.	Christ retires in the Evening from the City.
—	.....	Matt. xxi. 20, 21, 22; Mark xi. 20-27.	Tuesday—Third day before the Passover —The Fig-tree is now withered.
—	.....	Matt. xxi. 23, to the end, and xxii. 1-15; Mark xi. 27, to the end, and xii. 1-13; Luke xx. 1-20.	Christ answers the Chief Priests, who inquire concerning the Authority by which He acted —Parables of the Vineyard and Marriage-Feast.

A.D.	Place.	Scripture.	Contents.
29	Jerusalem...	Matt. xxii. 15-23; Mark xii. 13-18; Luke xx. 20-27.	Christ replies to the Herodians.
—	Matt. xxii. 23-34; Mark xii. 18-28; Luke xx. 27-41.	Christ replies to the Sadducees.
—	Matt. xxii. 34-41; Mark xii. 28-35.	Christ replies to the Pharisees.
—	Matt. xxii. 41, to the end; Mark xii. 35, 36, 37; Luke xx. 41-45.	Christ inquires of the Pharisees concern- ing the Messiah.
—	Matt. xxiii.; Mark xii. 38, 39, 40; Luke xx. 45, to the end.	Christ severely reproves the Pharisees.
—	Mark xii. 41, to the end; Luke xxi. 1-5.	Christ applauds the liberality of the poor Widow.
—	Matt. xxiv. 1-36; Mark xiii. 1-32; Luke xxi. 5-34.	Christ foretels the Destruction of Jerusa- lem—the end of the Jewish Dispensa- tion—and of the World.
—	Matt. xxiv. 36, to the end; Mark xiii. 32, to the end; Luke xxi. 34, 35, 36.	Christ compares the suddenness of his second Advent to the coming of the Deluge.
—	Matt. xxv. 1-14 ...	The Parable of the wise and foolish Vir- gins.
—	Matt. xxv. 14-31 ...	The Parable of the Servants and the Ta- lents.
—	Matt. xxv. 31, to the end.	Christ declares the Proceedings at the Day of Judgment.
—	Luke xxii. 37, 38...	Christ retires from the City to the Mount of Olives.
—	Matt. xxvi. 1, 2; Mark xiv. part of ver. 1.	Wednesday—Second day before the Cruci- fixion—Christ foretels his approaching Death.
—	Matt. xxvi. 3, 4, 5; Mark xiv. part of ver. 1, ver. 2; Luke xxii. 1, 2.	The Rulers consult how they may take Christ.
—	Matt. xxvi. 14, 15, 16; Mark xiv. 10, 11; Luke xxii. 3-7.	Judas agrees with the Chief Priests to betray Christ.
—	Matt. xxvi. 17, 18, 19; Mark xiv. 12- 17; Luke xxii. 7- 14.	Thursday—The day before the Crucifixion —Christ directs two of his Disciples to prepare the Passover.
—	Matt. xxvi. 20; Mark xiv. 17; Luke xxii. 14-19; John xiii. 1.	Christ partakes of the last Passover.
—	Luke xxii. 24-28; John xiii. 2-17.	Christ again reproves the Ambition of his Disciples.
—	Matt. xxvi. 21-26; Mark xiv. 18-22; Luke xxii. 21, 22, 23; John xiii. 17- 31.	Christ sitting at the Passover, and con- tinuing the Conversation, speaks of his Betrayal.
—	Luke xxii. 28-39; John xiii. 31, to the end.	Judas goes out to betray Christ, who pre- dicts Peter's denial of Him, and the danger of the rest of the Apostles

A.D.	Place.	Scripture.	Contents.
29	Jerusalem ...	Matt. xxvi. 26-30; Mark xiv. 22-26; Luke xxii. 19, 20.	Christ institutes the Eucharist.
—	John xiv.	Christ exhorts the Apostles, and consoles them on his approaching Death.
—	Matt. xxvi. 30; Mark xiv. 26; Luke xxii. 39.	Christ goes with his Disciples to the Mount of Olives.
—	John xv. 1-9.....	Christ declares Himself to be the true Vine.
—	John xv. 9, to the end; xvi. 1-5.	Christ exhorts the Apostles to mutual Love, and to prepare for Persecution.
—	John xvi. 5, to the end.	Christ promises the gifts of the Holy Spirit.
—	John xvii.	Christ intercedes for all his Followers.
—	Matt. xxvi. 31-36; Mark xiv. 27-32.	Christ again predicts Peter's denial of Him.
—	Matt. xxvi. 36-47; Mark xiv. 32-43; Luke xxii. 40-47; John xviii. 1, 2.	Christ goes into the Garden of Gethsemane—His Agony there.
—	Matt. xxvi. 47-57; Mark xiv. 43-51; Luke xxii. 47-54; John xviii. 3-12.	Christ is betrayed and apprehended—The Resistance of Peter.

THIRTEENTH PERIOD.—*From the Apprehension of Christ to the Crucifixion.*

29	Jerusalem ...	Matt. xxvi. 57; Mark xiv. 51, 52, 53; Luke xxii. 54; John xviii. 12, 13, 14.	Christ is taken to Annas, and to the Palace of Caiaphas.
—	.....	Matt. xxvi. 58; Mark xiv. 54; Luke xxii. 55; John xviii. 15, 16.	Peter and John follow their Master.
—	.....	Matt. xxvi. 59-67; Mark xiv. 55-65; John xviii. 19-25.	Christ is first examined and condemned in the House of the High Priest.
—	.....	Matt. xxvi. 67, 68; Mark xiv. 65; Luke xxii. 63, 64, 65.	Twelve at Night—Christ is struck, and insulted by the Soldiers.
—	.....	Matt. xxvi. 69, 70; Mark xiv. 66, 67, 68; Luke xxii. 56, 57; John xviii. 17, 18, and 25, 26, 27.	Peter's first Denial of Christ in the Hall of the High Priest.
—	.....	Matt. xxvi. 71, 72; Mark xiv. 69, part of 70; Luke xxii. 58.	After Midnight—Peter's second Denial of Christ, at the Porch of the Palace of the High Priest.
—	.....	Matt. xxvi. 73, to the end; Mark xiv. 70, to the end; Luke xxii. 59-62.	Friday, the day of the Crucifixion—Time, about Three in the Morning—Peter's third Denial of Christ, in the Room where Christ was waiting among the Soldiers, till the dawn of day.
—	.....	Matt. xxvii. 1; Mark xv. part of ver. 1; Luke xxii. 66, to the end.	Christ is taken before the Sanhedrim, and condemned.
—	.....	Matt. xxvii. 3-11...	Judas declares the Innocence of Christ.

A.D.	Place.	Scripture.	Contents.
29	Jerusalem ...	Matt. xxvii. 2, and 11-15; Mark xv. part of ver. 1-6; Luke xxiii. 1-5; John xviii. 28-39.	Christ is accused before Pilate, and is by him also declared innocent.
—	Luke xxiii. 5-13 ...	Christ is sent by Pilate to Herod.
—	Matt. xxvii. 15-21; Mark xv. 6-12; Luke xxiii. 13-20; John xviii. 39.	Christ is brought back again to Pilate, who again declares him innocent, and endeavours to persuade the people to ask Barabbas.
—	Matt. xxvii. 21, 22, 23; Mark xv. 12, 13, 14; Luke xxiii. 20-24; John xviii. 40.	Pilate three times endeavours again to release Christ.
—	Matt. xxvii. 24, 25.	The Jews imprecate the punishment of Christ's Death upon themselves.
—	Matt. xxvii. 26-31; Mark xv. 15-20; Luke xxiii. 24, 25; John xix. 1, part of ver. 16.	Pilate releases Barabbas, and delivers Christ to be crucified.
—	Matt. xxvii. 31, 32; Mark xv. 20, 21; Luke xxiii. 26-33; John xix. part of ver. 16 and ver. 17.	Christ is led away from the Judgment-hall of Pilate to Mount Calvary.
—	Calvary	Matt. xxvii. 33, 34, 37, 38; Mark xv. 22, 23, 26, 27, 28; Luke xxiii. 33-38; John xix. 18-23.	Christ arrives at Mount Calvary, and is crucified.
—	Luke xxiii. part of ver. 34.	Christ prays for his Murderers.
—	Matt. xxvii. 35, 36; Mark xv. 24, 25; Luke xxiii. part of ver. 34; John xix. 23, 24.	The Soldiers divide and cast Lots for the Raiment of Christ.
—	Matt. xxvii. 39-45; Mark xv. 29-33; Luke xxiii. 35, 36, 37.	Christ is reviled, when on the Cross, by the Rulers, the Soldiers, the Passengers, the Chief Priests, and the Malefactors.
—	Luke xxiii. 39-44...	Christ, when dying as a Man, asserts his Divinity, in his answer to the penitent thief.
—	John xix. 25, 26, 27.	Christ commends his Mother to the care of John.
—	Matt. xxvii. 45, to part of ver. 52, 54, 55, 56; Mark xv. 33-42; Luke xxiii. 44-50; John xix. 28-38.	The Death of Christ and its attendant circumstances.

FOURTEENTH PERIOD.—*From the Death of Christ till his Ascension into Heaven.*

29	Jerusalem ...	Matt. xxvii. 57-61; Mark xv. 42-47; Luke xxiii. 50-55; John xix. 38, to the end.	Joseph of Arimathea, and Nicodemus, bury the Body of Christ.
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A.D.	Place.	Scripture.	Contents
29	Jerusalem ...	Mark xv. 47; Luke xliii. 55.	Mary Magdalene, and the other Mary, and the Women from Galilee, observe where the Body of Christ was laid.
—	Luke xliii. 56	The Women from Galilee hasten to return Home before the Sabbath began, to prepare Spices.
—	Matt. xxvii. 61.....	Mary Magdalene, and the other Mary, continue to sit opposite the Sepulchre, till it is too late to prepare their Spices.
—	Matt. xxvii. 62, to the end.	The Sabbath being ended, the Chief Priests prepare a Guard of Soldiers to watch the Sepulchre.
—	Mark xvi. 1	The Sabbath being over, Mary Magdalene, the other Mary, and Salome, purchase their Spices to anoint the Body of Christ.
—	Matt. xxviii. 1; Mark xvi. part of ver. 2; John xx. part of ver. 1.	The Morning of Easter-day—Mary Magdalene, the other Mary, and Salome, leave their Homes very early to go to the Sepulchre.
—	Matt. xxviii. 2, 3, 4.	After they had left their Homes, and before their arrival at the Sepulchre, Christ rises from the Dead.
—	Matt. xxvii. part of ver. 52, and ver. 53.	The Bodies of many come out of their Graves, and go to Jerusalem.
—	Mark xvi. part of ver. 2, and ver. 3, 4; John xx. part of ver. 1.	Mary Magdalene, the other Mary, and Salome, arrive at the Sepulchre, and find the stone rolled away.
—	John xx. 2	Mary Magdalene leaves the other Mary and Salome, to tell Peter.
—	Matt. xxviii. 5, 6, 7; Mark xvi. 5, 6, 7.	Salome and the other Mary, during the absence of Mary Magdalene, enter the Porch of the Sepulchre, and see one Angel, who commands them to inform the Disciples that Jesus was risen.
—	Matt. xxviii. 8; Mark xvi. 8.	Salome and the other Mary leave the Sepulchre.
—	John xx. 3-11.	Peter and John, as soon as they hear the report of Mary Magdalene, hasten to the Sepulchre, which they inspect, and immediately depart.
—	John xx. part of ver. 11.	Mary Magdalene, having followed Peter and John, remains at the Sepulchre after their departure.
—	John xx. part of ver. 11, 12, 13, and part of 14.	Mary Magdalene looks into the Tomb, and sees two Angels.
—	Mark xvi. 9; John xx. part of ver. 14, and 15-18.	Christ first appears to Mary Magdalene, and commands her to inform the Disciples that He has risen.
—	Matt. xxviii. 9, 10; John xx. 18.	Mary Magdalene, when going to inform the Disciples that Christ had risen, meets again with Salome and the other Mary—Christ appears to the three Women.
—	Matt. xxviii. 11-16.	The Soldiers, who had fled from the Sepulchre, report to the High Priest the Resurrection of Christ.
—	Luke xxiv. 1, 2, 3.	The Second Party of Women from Galilee, who had bought their Spices on the Evening previous to the Sabbath, having had a longer way to come to the Sepulchre, arrive after the departure of the others, and find the stone rolled away.

A.D.	Place.	Scripture.	Contents.
29	Jerusalem ...	Luke xxiv. 4-10	Two Angels appear to them also, assuring them that Christ was risen, and reminding them of his foretelling this Fact.
—	Mark xvi. 10; Luke xxiv. 10.	Mary Magdalene unites her Testimony to that of the Galilean Women.
—	Mark xvi. 11; Luke xxiv. 11.	The Apostles are still incredulous.
—	Luke xxiv. part of ver. 12.	Peter goes again to the Sepulchre.
—	Luke xxiv. part of ver. 12, 34.	Christ appears to St. Peter.
—	Mark xvi. 12; Luke xxiv. 13-33.	Christ appears to Cleopas and another Disciple, going to Emmaus.
—	Mark xvi. 13; Luke xxiv. 33, 34, 35.	Cleopas and his Companion return to Jerusalem, and assure the Apostles that Christ had certainly risen.
—	Luke xxiv. 36-43; John x. 19-23.	Christ appears to the assembled Apostles, Thomas only being absent, convinces them of the Identity of his resurrection-Body, and blesses them.
—	Mark xvi. 13; John xx. 24, 25.	Thomas is still incredulous.
—	Mark xvi. 14; John xx. 26-29.	Christ appears to the Eleven, Thomas being present.
—	Matt. xxviii. 16, 17, and part of ver. 18.	Christ appears to a large number of his Disciples on a Mountain in Galilee.
—	John xxi. 1-24.	Christ appears again at the Sea of Tiberias—His Conversation with St. Peter.
—	Luke xxiv. 44-49; Acts i. 4, 5.	Christ appears to his Apostles at Jerusalem, and commissions them to convert the World.
—	Matt. xxviii. 18-20; Mark xvi. 15-20; Luke xxiv. 50-53; Acts i. 6-12.	Christ leads out his Apostles to Bethany, within sight of Jerusalem, renews their Commission, blesses them, and ascends up visibly into Heaven; from whence He shall come to Judge the Living and the Dead.
—	John xx. 30, 31; John xxi. 25.	St. John's Conclusion to the Gospel History of Jesus Christ.

FIFTEENTH PERIOD.—*From the Ascension of Christ to the Termination of the Period in which the Gospel was preached to the Proselytes of Righteousness, and to the Jews only.*

29	Jerusalem ...	Acts i. 1, 2, 3, and ver. 13, 14.	After the Ascension of Christ the Apostles return to Jerusalem.
—	.....	Acts i. 15, to the end.	Matthias is appointed to the Apostleship in the place of Judas.
—	.....	Acts ii. 1-14	Descent of the Holy Spirit on the Day of Pentecost.
—	.....	Acts ii. 14-37	Address of St. Peter to the Multitude.
—	.....	Acts ii. 37-42	Effects of St. Peter's Address.
—	.....	Acts ii. 42. to the end.	Union of the first Converts in the primitive Church.
30	.....	Acts iii. 1-12	A Cripple is miraculously and publicly healed by St. Peter and St. John.
—	.....	Acts iii. 12, to the end.	St. Peter again addresses the People.
—	.....	Acts iv. 1-8	St. Peter and St. John are imprisoned by order of the Sanhedrim.

A.D.	Place.	Scripture.	Contents.
30	Jerusalem ...	Acts iv. 8-23.....	St. Peter's Address to the assembled Sanhedrim.
—	.....	Acts iv. 23-32	The Prayer of the Church on the Liberation of St. Peter and St. John.
—	.....	Acts iv. 32, to the end.	The Union and Munificence of the primitive Church.
31	.....	Acts v. 1-11	Death of Ananias and Sapphira.
—	.....	Acts v. 11-17.....	State of the Church at this time.
32	.....	Acts v. 17, to part of ver. 21.	An Angel delivers the Apostles from Prison.
—	.....	Acts v. part of 21-34.	The Sanhedrim again assemble—St. Peter asserts before them the Messiahship of Christ.
—	.....	Acts v. 34, to the end.	By the Advice of Gamaliel the Apostles are dismissed.
—	.....	Acts vi. 1-7	The Appointment of Seven Deacons.
33	.....	Acts vi. 7	The Church continues to increase in numbers.
33 or 34	.....	Acts vi. 8-15.....	St. Stephen, having boldly asserted the Messiahship of Christ, is accused of Blasphemy before the Sanhedrim.
—	.....	Acts vi. 15, and vii. 1-51.	St. Stephen defends himself before the Sanhedrim.
33 or 34	.....	Acts vii. 51, 52, 53.	Stephen, being interrupted in his Defence, reproaches the Sanhedrim as the Murderers of their Messiah.
—	.....	Acts vii. 54, to the end; viii. part of ver. 1 and 2.	Stephen, praying for his Murderers, is stoned to death.
—	.....	Acts viii. part of ver. 1, and ver. 3.	General Persecution of the Christians, in which Saul (afterwards St. Paul) particularly distinguishes himself.
—	Samaria	Acts viii. 5-14	Philip the Deacon, having left Jerusalem on account of the Persecution, goes to Samaria, and preaches there, and works Miracles.
—	.....	Acts viii. 14-17.....	St. Peter and St. John come down from Jerusalem to Samaria, to confer the gifts of the Holy Ghost on the New Converts.
34	.....	Acts viii. 18-25.....	St. Peter reproves Simon Magus.
—	.....	Acts viii. 25	St. Peter and St. John preach in many Villages of the Samaritans.
—	Gaza	Acts viii. 26, to the end.	The Treasurer of Queen Candace, a Proselyte of Righteousness, is converted and baptized by Philip, who now preaches through the cities of Judæa.
—	Provinces of Judea, &c.	Acts viii. 4	Many of the Converts who had fled from Jerusalem in consequence of the Persecution there, preach the Gospel to the Jews in the Provinces.
35	Near Damascus.	Acts ix. 1-10.....	Saul, on his way to Damascus, is converted to the Religion he was opposing, on hearing a voice from heaven, and seeing the Shechinah.
38	Damascus ...	Acts ix. 10-20	Saul is baptized.
to	.....	Acts ix. 20-31	Saul preaches in the Synagogue of the Jews.
40	Palestino ...	Acts ix. 32, to the end.	St. Peter, having preached through Judæa, comes to Lydda, where he cures Æneas, and raises Dorcas from the dead.
40	.....	Acts ix. 31.....	The Churches are at rest from Persecution, in consequence of the conversion of Saul, and the conduct of Caligula.

SIXTEENTH PERIOD.—*The Gospel having now been preached to the Jews in Jerusalem, Judea, Samaria, and the Provinces, the time arrives for the Conversion of the devout Gentiles, or Proselytes of the Gate.*

A.D.	Place.	Scripture.	Contents.
40	Cæsarea and Joppa.	Acts x. 1-17	St. Peter sees a Vision, in which he is commanded to visit a Gentile, who had been miraculously instructed to send for St. Peter.
—	Cæsarea	Acts x. 17-34.....	St. Peter visits Cornelius, a Roman Centurion.
—	.....	Acts x. 34-44.....	St. Peter first declares Christ to be the Saviour of all, even of the Gentiles, who believe in Him.
—	.....	Acts x. 44, to the end.	Cornelius and his friends receive the Holy Ghost and are baptized.
—	Jerusalem ...	Acts xi. 1-19.....	St. Peter defends his conduct in visiting and baptizing Cornelius.
41	Judea and the Provinces	Acts xi. 19, 20, 21..	The Converts who had been dispersed by the Persecution after the Death of Stephen, having heard of the Vision of St. Peter, preach to the devout Gentiles also.
—	Jerusalem and Antioch.	Acts xi. 22, 23, 24..	The Church at Jerusalem commissions Barnabas to make inquiries into this matter.
42	Tarsus	Acts xi. 25, 26	Barnabas goes to Tarsus for Saul, whom he takes with him to Antioch, where the Converts were preaching to the devout Gentiles.
43	Jerusalem ...	Acts xii. 1, to part of ver. 19.	Herod Agrippa condemns James, the Brother of John, to death, and imprisons Peter, who is miraculously released, and presents himself to the other James, who had been made Bishop of Jerusalem.
44	.....	Acts xi. 27, to the end.	The Converts at Antioch, being forewarned by Agabus, send Relief to their Brethren at Jerusalem, by the hands of Barnabas and Saul.
—	Cæsarea	Acts xii. part of ver. 19, and 20-24.	The death of Herod Agrippa.
—	.....	Acts xii. 24	The Church continues to increase.
45	.....	Acts xiii. 25	Saul, having seen a Vision in the Temple, in which he is commanded to leave Jerusalem, and to preach to the Gentiles, returns with Barnabas to Antioch.

SEVENTEENTH PERIOD.—*Period for preaching the Gospel to the idolatrous Gentiles, and St. Paul's First Apostolical Journey.*

45	Antioch	Acts xiii. 1, 2, 3 ...	The Apostles having been absent from Jerusalem when Saul saw his Vision in the Temple, he and Barnabas are separated to the Apostolic Office by the heads of the Church at Antioch.
—	Seleucia.....	Acts xiii. part of ver. 4.	Saul, in company with Barnabas, commences his first Apostolical Journey, by going from Antioch to Seleucia.
—	Salamis, Paphos.	Acts xiii. part of ver. 4 to 13.	From Seleucia to Salamis, and Paphos, in Cyprus, where Sergius Paulus is converted, being the first known or recorded Convert of the idolatrous Gentiles;

A.D.	Place.	Scripture.	Contents.
45	Perga	Acts xiii. 13	From Cyprus to Perga in Pamphylia.
46	Antioch in Pisidia	Acts xiii. 14-51.....	From Perga to Antioch in Pisidia—St. Paul, according to his custom, first preaches to the Jews—They are driven out of Antioch.
—	Iconium.....	Acts xiii. 51, 52; xiv. 1, to part of ver. 6.	From Antioch in Pisidia to Iconium in Lycaonia—The people about to stone them.
—	Lystra.....	Acts xiv. 8, to part of ver. 20.	From Iconium to Lystra—The People attempt to offer them Sacrifice, and afterwards stone them.
47	.....	Acts xiv. last part of ver. 20, part of ver. 6, and ver. 7.	From Lystra to Derbe.
—	Lystra, Iconium, Antioch.	Acts xiv. 21, 22, 23.	St. Paul and Barnabas return to Lystra, Iconium, and Antioch in Pisidia, ordaining in all the Churches.
48	Pisidia, Perga, Attalia.	Acts xiv. 24, 25 ...	They proceed through Pisidia, Perga, and Attalia, in Pamphylia.
—	Antioch	Acts xiv. 26, to the end.	They return to Antioch, and submit an account of their proceedings to the Church in that place.
49	.....	Acts xv. 1, 2.....	Dissensions at Antioch concerning Circumcision, before the commencement of St. Paul's second Apostolical Journey.
—	Jerusalem ...	Acts xv. 3-30	St. Paul and Barnabas go up to Jerusalem, to consult the Apostles and Elders—Decree of James and of the Church in this matter.
—	Antioch	Acts xv. 30-33	St. Paul and Barnabas return to the Church at Antioch, with the Decree of the Church at Jerusalem, on the subject of the necessity of Circumcision.

Eighteenth Period.—*The Second Apostolical Journey of St. Paul.*

50	Antioch	Acts xv. 36	After remaining some time at Antioch, St. Paul proposes to Barnabas to commence another Visitation of the Churches.
—	Syria and Cilicia.	Acts xv. 37, to the end, and xvi. 4, 5.	St. Paul, separating from Barnabas, proceeds from Antioch to Syria and Cilicia.
—	Derbe and Lystra.	Acts xvi. 1, 2; 3....	St. Paul proceeds to Derbe and Lystra in Iconium—Timothy his attendant.
—	Phrygia and Galatia.	Acts xvi. 6	They proceed from Iconium to Phrygia and Galatia.
—	.....	Acts xvi. 7-10	From Galatia to Mysia and Troas.
—	Samothrace	Acts xvi. part of ver. 11.	From Troas to Samothrace.
—	Neapolis ...	Acts xvi. part of ver. 11.	From Samothrace to Neapolis.
—	Philippi	Acts xvi. 12, to the end.	From Neapolis to Philippi, where the Pythoness is dispossessed, and the Jailor converted.
—	Thessalonica	Acts xvii. 1-10	From Philippi to Amphipolis and Apollonia, to Thessalonica.
—	.....	.....	St. Paul writes his Epistle to the Galatians.
51	Berea	Acts xvii. 10-13 ...	From Thessalonica to Berea—The Causes for which the Bereans are favourably disposed to receive the Gospel.

A.D.	Place.	Scripture.	Contents.
51	Athens	Acts xvii. 15, to the end.	From Berea, having left there Silas and Timothy, St. Paul proceeds to Athens, where he preaches to the Philosophers and Students.
—	Corinth	Acts xviii. 1-6	From Athens St. Paul proceeds to Corinth, where he is reduced to labour for his support—Silas and Timothy join him at Corinth.
—	.....	.....	St. Paul writes his first Epistle to the Thessalonians.
52	.....	Acts xviii. 6-12.....	St. Paul, being rejected by the Jews, continues at Corinth, preaching to the Gentiles.
—	.....	.....	St. Paul writes his second Epistle to the Thessalonians.
—	.....	Acts xviii. 12, to part of ver. 18.	St. Paul, still at Corinth, is brought before the Judgment-seat of Gallio the Proconsul, the brother of Seneca.
53	Crete, Nicompolis.	.....	St. Paul writes his Epistle to Titus.
54	Cenchrea....	Acts xviii. part of ver. 18.	St. Paul proceeds to Cenchrea.
—	Ephesus.....	Acts xviii. 19	From Cenchrea to Ephesus, where he disputed with the Jews.
55	Cæsarea, Jerusalem, Antioch in Syria.	Acts xviii. 20, 21, 22.	From Ephesus St. Paul proceeds to Cæsarea; and, having saluted the Church at Jerusalem, completes his second Apostolical Journey, by returning to Antioch in Syria.

NINETEENTH PERIOD.—*The Third Apostolical Journey of St. Paul.*

55	Antioch, Galatia, Phrygia.	Acts xviii. 23	St. Paul again leaves Antioch, to visit the Churches of Galatia and Phrygia.
—	.....	Acts xviii. 24, to the end.	History of Apollos, who was now preaching to the Church at Ephesus, planted by St. Paul.
—	Ephesus.....	Acts xix. 1-11	St. Paul proceeds from Phrygia to Ephesus, and disputes there with the Jews.
56	.....	Acts xix. 11-21.....	St. Paul continues two years in Ephesus—The people burn their magical Books.
—	.....	Acts xix. 21, part of ver. 22.	St. Paul sends Timothy and Erastus to Macedonia and Achaia.
—	.....	.....	St. Paul writes his first Epistle to the Corinthians.
56 or 57	Ephesus.....	Acts xix. part of ver. 22, to the end.	St. Paul continues at Ephesus—A Mob is occasioned at that place by Demetrius.
57	Macedonia...	Acts xx. 1.....	St. Paul leaves Ephesus, and goes to Macedonia.
—	.....	.....	St. Paul writes his first Epistle to Timothy.
—	Macedonia, Achaia.	Acts xx. 2, and part of ver. 3.	St. Paul proceeds from Macedonia to Greece, or Achaia, and continues there three months.
58	.....	.....	St. Paul writes his second Epistle to the Corinthians.
—	Achaia, Corinth, Macedonia.	Acts xx. part of ver. 3, to ver. 6.	St. Paul returns from Achaia and Corinth to Macedonia, sending his companions forward to Troas.
—	Corinth .....	.....	St. Paul writes his Epistle to the Romans.
—	Troas	Acts xx. 6-13	From Macedonia St. Paul proceeds to Troas, where he raises Eutychus to life.

A.D.	Place.	Scripture.	Contents.
58	Assos and Mitylene.	Acts xx. 13, 14.....	From Troas to Assos and Mitylene.
—	Chios	Acts xx. part of ver. 15.	From Mitylene to Chios.
—	Samos and Trogyllium.	Acts xx. part of ver. 15.	From Chios to Samos and Trogyllium.
—	Miletus	Acts xx. part of ver. 15, to the end.	From Trogyllium to Miletus, where St. Paul meets, and takes his farewell of the Elders of the Church at Ephesus.
—	Coos and Rhodes, Patara, Tyre.	Acts xxi. 1, 2, 3 ...	From Miletus to Coos and Rhodes and Patara; whence St. Paul, together with St. Luke, the writer of the Book of the Acts of the Apostles, sail in a Phœnician vessel to Syria, and land in Tyre.
—	Tyre	Acts xxi. 4, 5, 6 ...	St. Paul and St. Luke continue at Tyre seven days.
—	Ptolemais ...	Acts xxi. 7	They proceed from Tyre to Ptolemais.
—	Cæsarea	Acts xxi. 8-15	From Ptolemais to Cæsarea, to the house of Philip the Evangelist—Agabus prophesies the near imprisonment of St. Paul.
—	Jerusalem ...	Acts xxi. 15-27.....	St. Paul and St. Luke arrive at Jerusalem, and present themselves to St. James and the Church.
—	.....	Acts xxi. 27-37.....	St. Paul is apprehended by the chief Captain of the Temple, in consequence of a Mob, occasioned by some of the Asiatic Jews, who met St. Paul in the Temple.
—	.....	Acts xxi. 37 to the end, and xxii. 1-22.	St. Paul makes his Defence before the populace.
—	.....	Acts xxii. 22.....	On declaring his mission to preach to the Gentiles, the Jews clamour for his death.
—	.....	Acts xxii. 23-30 ...	St. Paul claims the privilege of a Roman citizen.
—	.....	Acts xxii. 30, and xxiii. 1-11.	St. Paul is brought before the Sanhedrim, who are summoned by the Captain of the Temple.
—	.....	Acts xxiii. 11	St. Paul is encouraged by a Vision to persevere.
—	Antipatris, Cæsarea	Acts xxiii. 12, to the end.	In consequence of the discovery of a conspiracy to kill St. Paul, he is removed by night from Jerusalem, through Antipatris to Cæsarea.
—	.....	Acts xxiv. 1-22 ...	St. Paul is accused of sedition before Felix, the Governor of Judea.
—	.....	Acts xxiv. 22, to the end.	After many conferences with Felix, St. Paul is continued in prison till the arrival of Porcius Festus.
60	.....	Acts xxv. 1-13.	Trial of St Paul before Festus—He appeals to the Emperor.
—	.....	Acts xxv. 13-23 ...	Curious account given to Agrippa by Festus of the accusation against St. Paul.
—	.....	Acts xxv. 23, to the end, chap. xxvi.	St. Paul defends his cause before Festus and Agrippa—their conduct on that occasion.
—	.....	Acts xxvii. 1.....	St. Paul, being surrendered as a prisoner to the Centurion, is prevented from completing this Journey, by returning to Antioch, as he had usually done.

TWENTIETH PERIOD.—*St. Paul commences his Voyage to Rome as a Prisoner.*

A.D.	Place.	Scripture.	Contents.
60	Cæsarea.....	Acts xxvii. 2	St. Paul commences his voyage to Rome as a prisoner.
—	.....	Acts xxvii. 3, 4	The ship arrives at Sidon, from whence it proceeds to Cyprus.
—	.....	Acts xxvii. 5-9.....	After changing their ship at Tyre, they proceed to Cnidus, Salmone in Crete, and the city of Lasea.
—	.....	Acts xxvii. 9-14 ...	St. Paul warns the master of the ship of the danger they were in—They attempt to reach Phenice in Crete.
—	.....	Acts xxvii. 14, to the end.	The ship is wrecked, but the lives of all on board are saved, as St. Paul had foretold.
—	.....	Acts xxviii. 1-11...	They land on the Island of Melita.
—	.....	Acts xxviii. 11, to part of ver. 14.	After three months they sail to Rome.
—	Rome	Acts xxviii. part of ver. 14 to 17.	St. Paul arrives at Rome, and is kindly received by the Brethren.
—	.....	Acts xxviii. 17-30..	St. Paul summons the Jews at Rome, to explain to them the causes of his imprisonment.
61	.....	.....	St. Paul writes his Epistle to the Ephesians.
62	Rome .....	.....	St. Paul writes his Epistle to the Philippians.
—	.....	.....	St. Paul writes his Epistle to the Colossians.
—	.....	.....	St. Paul writes his Epistle to his friend Philemon.
—	Jerusalem...	.....	St. James writes his Epistle to the Jewish Christians in general.
—	Rome	Acts xxviii. 30, 31..	St. Paul remains at Rome for two years, during which time the Jews do not dare to prosecute him before the Emperor.

TWENTY-FIRST PERIOD.—*From the Commencement of the Fifth and last Journey of St. Paul, to the Completion of the Canon of the whole Scriptures.*

During this period, the New Testament gives no regular history of St. Paul. The account, therefore, of his journeyings after his liberation from Rome, is only to be gathered from the incidental allusions which occur in his subsequent Epistles, and from the narratives of Early Ecclesiastical Writers.

He seems to have written his Epistle to the Hebrews before he left Italy, where he remained for a short time, waiting for Timothy. He afterwards visited Jerusalem, Antioch in Syria, Colosse, Philippi, Corinth, Troas, and Miletum. He is supposed also to have travelled westward, into Spain, and perhaps Britain. About the year A.D. 65, he returned to Rome, and was again imprisoned, in the general persecution by Nero.

The remaining events of this period may be thus arranged :—

65	Italy .....	.....	St. Paul, in the anticipation of the near approach of Death, writes his second Epistle to Timothy.
or	.....	.....	St. Peter writes his first Epistle.
66	Italy, or Rome.	.....	St. Peter, under the impression of approaching Martyrdom, writes his second Epistle.

A.D.	Place.	Scripture.	Contents.
66	Probably Syria.	.....	Jude writes his Epistle.
—	Rome .....	.....	Martyrdom of St. Peter and St. Paul.
70	Jerusalem ...	.....	Destruction of Jerusalem, A. D. 70.
96	Asia Minor..	.....	St. John writes the Apocalypse, or Book of Revelation.
96 to 106	Asia Minor..	.....	St. John writes his Epistles.
—	.....	.....	St. John sanctions the Books of the New Testament, and completes the Canon of Scripture, by writing his Gospel, at the request of the Church at Ephesus.

TABLES

OF

WEIGHTS, MEASURES, AND MONEY,

MENTIONED IN THE BIBLE:

CHIEFLY EXTRACTED FROM DR. ARBUTHNOT'S TABLES OF ANCIENT COINS,
WEIGHTS, AND MEASURES, AND QUOTED BY HORNE.

1. Jewish weights reduced to English troy weight.

	lbs.	oz.	pen.	gr.
The gerah, one-twentieth of a shekel	0	...	0	... 12
Bekah, half a shekel.....	0	...	0	... 5 ... 0
The shekel	0	...	0	... 10 ... 0
The maneh, 60 shekels.....	2	...	6	... 0 ... 0
The talent, 50 maneh, 3000 shekels	125	...	0	... 0 ... 0

2. Scripture measures of length reduced to English measure.

	Eng. feet.	inch.
A digit, Jer. lii. 21	0	... 0.912
4 | A palm, Exod. xxv. 25.....	0	... 3.648
12 | 3 | A span, Exod. xxviii. 16	0	... 10.944
24 | 6 | 3 | A cubit, Gen. vi. 15	1	... 9.888
96 | 24 | 6 | 2 | A fathom, Acts xvii. 28	7	... 3.552
144 | 36 | 12 | 6 | 1.5 | Ezekiel's reed, Ezek. xl. 3—5	10	... 11.328
192 | 48 | 16 | 8 | 2 | 1.3 | An Arabian pole	14	... 7.104
1920 | 480 | 160 | 80 | 20 | 13.3 | 10 | Measuringline, Ez.xl. 3.145	11.04	

3. The long Scripture measures.

	Eng. miles.	paces.	feet.
A cubit.....	0	...	0 ... 1.82 $\frac{1}{2}$
400 | A stadium or furlong, Luke xxiv. 13	0	...	145 ... 4.6
2000 | 5 | A Sabbath day's journey, Acts i. 12	0	...	729 ... 3.0
4000 | 10 | 2 | An eastern mile, Matt. v. 41	1	...	403 ... 1.0
12000 | 30 | 6 | 3 | A parasang.....	4	...	153 ... 3.0
96000 | 240 | 48 | 24 | 8 | A day's journey.....	33	...	172 ... 4.0

390 TABLES OF WEIGHTS, MEASURES, AND MONEY.

4. Scripture measures of capacity for liquids, reduced to English wine measure.

						Gal.	pints.
A caph	1.3	A log, Lev. xiv. 10				0 ...	0.625
	5.3	4	A cab			0 ...	0.833
	16	12	3	A hin, Exod. xxx. 24		1 ...	2
	32	24	6	2	A seah	2 ...	4
	96	72	18	6	3	A bath, or ephah, 1 Kings vii. 26; John iii. 6	7 ... 4
	960	720	180	60	20		
					10	A kor or homer, Ezek. xlv. 14; Isaiah v. 10	75 ... 5

5. Scripture measures of capacity for things dry, reduced to English corn measure.

						Peck.	gal.	pints.
A gachal						0 ...	0 ...	0.1416
	20	A cab or choenin, 2 Kings vi. 25; Rev. vi. 6				0 ...	0 ...	2.8333
	36	1.8	An omer, Exod. xvi. 36, and xxix. 40			0 ...	0 ...	5.1
	120	6	3.3	A seah, Matt. xiii. 33		1 ...	0 ...	1
	360	18	10	3	An ephah, Ezek. xiv. 11	3 ...	0 ...	3
	1800	90	50	15	5	A letech, Hos. iii. 2	16 ...	0 ... 0
	3600	180	100	30	10	2	A homer or kor, Num. xi. 32; Hosea iii. 2	32 ... 0 ... 1

6. Jewish money reduced to English standard.

						£	s.	d.
A gerah, Exod. xxx. 13						0	0	1.2687
	10	A bekah, Exod. xxxviii. 26				0	1	1.6875
	20	2	A shekel, Exod. xxx. 13; Isa. vii. 23; Matt. xvii. 27			0	2	3.375
	1200	120	50	A maneh or minah Hebraica, Luke xix. 13		5	14	0.75
	60000	6000	3000	60	A talent	342	3	9

A solidus aureus, or sextula, was worth 0 12 0.5

A sculus aureus, or gold shekel, was worth 1 16 6

A talent of gold was worth 5475 0 0

In the preceding table, silver is valued at 5s. and gold at 4l. per oz.

7. Roman money mentioned in the New Testament, reduced to the English standard.

						£	s.	d.	far.
A mite (λεπτον or ασσαριον), Mark xii. 42						0	0	0	0.25
A farthing (κοδραντης), Mark xii. 42						0	0	0	1.25
A penny or denarius (δηναριον), Matt. xxii. 19						0	0	7	2
A pound or mina						3	2	6	0

P R A Y E R S.

FOR THE TRUE UNDERSTANDING OF GOD'S WORD.

O LORD, as Thou alone art the Author of the Holy Scriptures, so likewise can no man, although he be never so wise, politic, and learned, understand them, except he be taught by the Holy Spirit, which alone is the school-master to lead the faithful into all truth. Vouchsafe, therefore, I most humbly beseech Thee, to breathe into my heart thy blessed Spirit, which may renew the senses of my mind, open my wits, reveal unto me the true understanding of thy holy mysteries, and plant in me such a certain and infallible knowledge of thy truth, that no subtle persuasion of man's wisdom may pluck me from thy truth; but that as I have learned the true understanding of thy blessed will, so I may remain in the same continually, come life, come death: unto the glory of thy blessed name. Amen. (King Edward VI.—Primer.)

Blessed Lord, who hast caused all Holy Scriptures to be written for our learning; grant that we may in such wise hear them, read, mark, learn, and inwardly digest them: that by patience and comfort of thy holy word, we may embrace and ever hold fast the blessed hope of everlasting life, which Thou hast given us in our Saviour Jesus Christ. *Amen.*

FOR A LIFE AGREEABLE TO OUR KNOWLEDGE.

As I have prayed unto Thee, O Heavenly Father, to be taught the true understanding of thy blessed word, by thy Holy Spirit, so I most entirely beseech Thee to give me grace to lead a life agreeable to my knowledge. Suffer me not to be of the number of those which profess that they

know God with their mouth, but deny Him with their deeds. Let me not be like unto that son which said unto his father, that he would labour in his vineyard, and yet laboured nothing at all, but went abroad, loitering idly. Make me rather like unto that good and fruitful land which yieldeth again her seed with great increase, that men, seeing my good works, may glorify Thee, my Heavenly Father. Amen. (King Edward VI.—Primer.)

A PRAYER PREFIXED TO SOME EDITIONS OF THE EARLY
ENGLISH VERSIONS.

O gracious God and most merciful Father, which hast vouchsafed us the rich and precious jewel of thy holy word, assist us by the Spirit, that it may be written in our hearts, to our everlasting comfort, to reprove us, to renew us, according to thine own image; to build us up, and edify us, unto the perfect building of thy Christ; sanctifying and increasing in us all heavenly virtues. Grant this, O Heavenly Father, for Jesus Christ's sake. Amen.

SCRIPTURE PRAYERS.

THY hands have made me and fashioned me: give me understanding, that I may learn thy Commandments. The entrance of thy word giveth light; it giveth understanding to the simple. Open Thou mine eyes, that I may behold wondrous things out of thy law^a.

Order my steps in thy word, and let not any iniquity have dominion over me. O that my ways were directed to keep thy statutes! then shall I not be ashamed when I have respect unto all thy commandments. I will run the way of thy commandments when Thou shalt enlarge my heart^b.

See also Col. i. 9, 10; Eph. i. 17, &c.; 1 Pet. ii. 1, 2; Psalm cxix.; suggesting other topics for prayer.

^a Psalm cxix. 73. 130. 18.

^b Psalm cxix. 133. 5, 6. 32.

H Y M N.

OLD TESTAMENT GOSPEL.

ISRAEL, in ancient days,
 Not only had a view
 Of Sinai in a blaze,
 But learn'd the Gospel too ;
 The types and figures were a glass,
 In which they saw a Saviour's face.

The Paschal sacrifice,
 And blood-besprinkled door^c,
 Seen with enlighten'd eyes,
 And once applied with power,
 Would teach the need of other blood,
 To reconcile an angry God.

The lamb, the dove, set forth
 His perfect innocence^d,
 Whose blood of matchless worth,
 Should be the soul's defence :
 For he who can for sin atone
 Must have no failings of his own.

The scape-goat on his head^e
 The people's trespass bore,
 And to the desert led,
 Was to be seen no more :
 In him our Surety seem'd to say,
 "Behold, I bear your sins away."

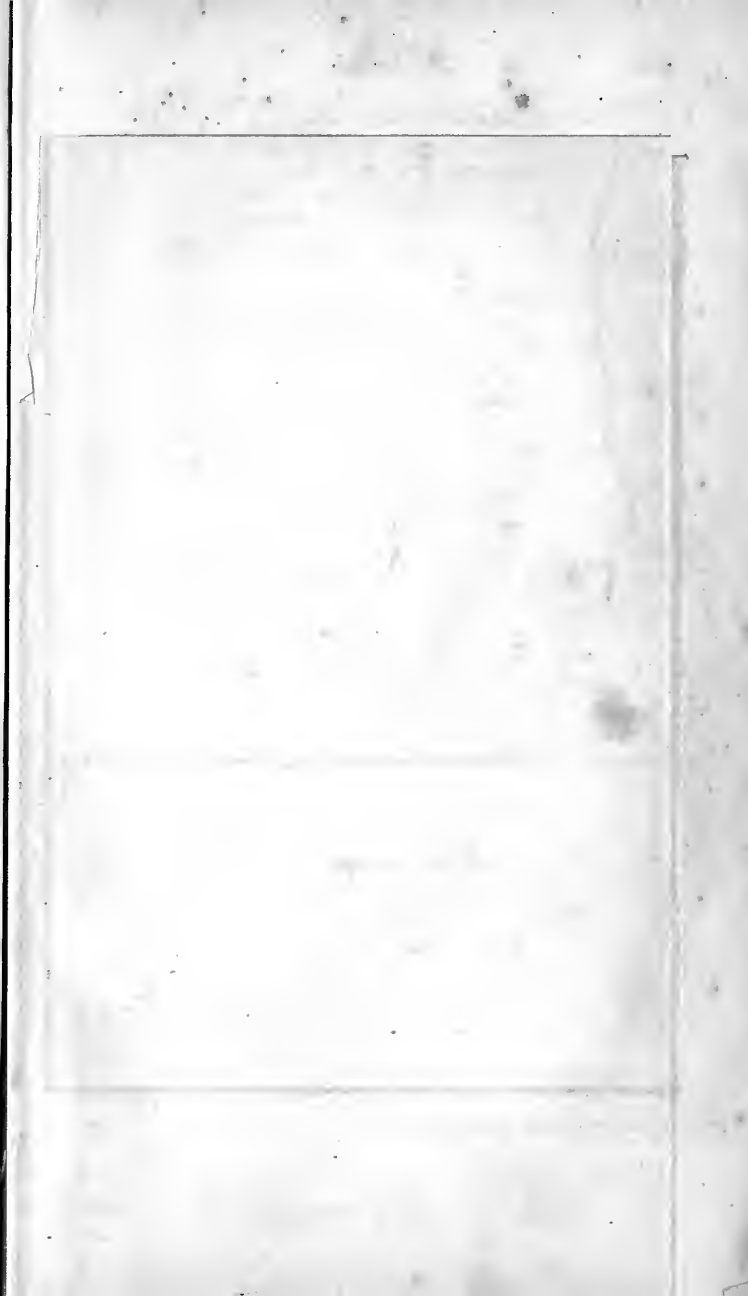
^c Exod. xii. 13.^d Lev. xii. 6.^e Lev. xvi. 21.

Dipt in his fellow's blood,
The living bird went free^f;
The type, well understood,
Express'd the sinner's plea;
Described a guilty soul enlarged,
And by a Saviour's death discharged.

Jesus, I love to trace,
Throughout the sacred page,
The footsteps of thy grace,
The same in every age!
O grant that I may faithful be
To clearer light vouchsafed to me!

COWPER.

^f Lev. xiv. 51—53.



Dipt in his fellow's blood,

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^a This index might easily be reduced to questions, and form a profitable examination for the instruction of the young, as already suggested, p. 2.

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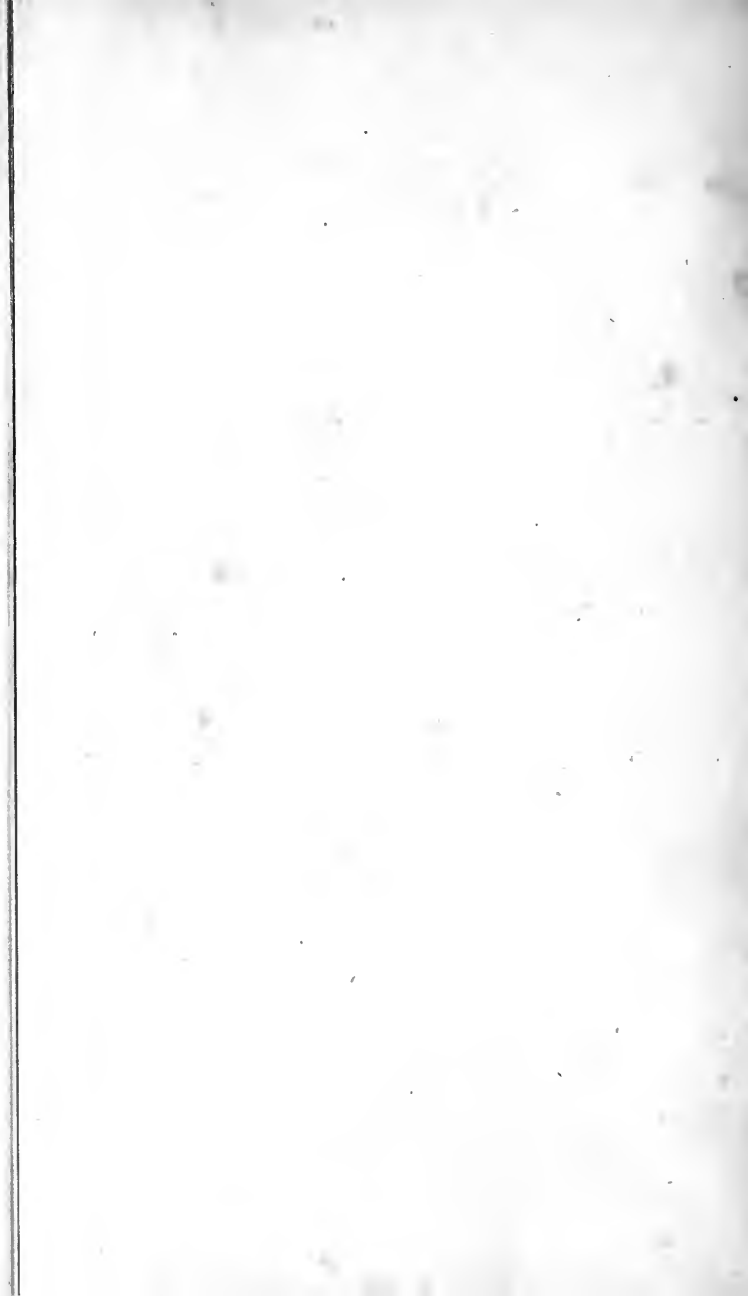
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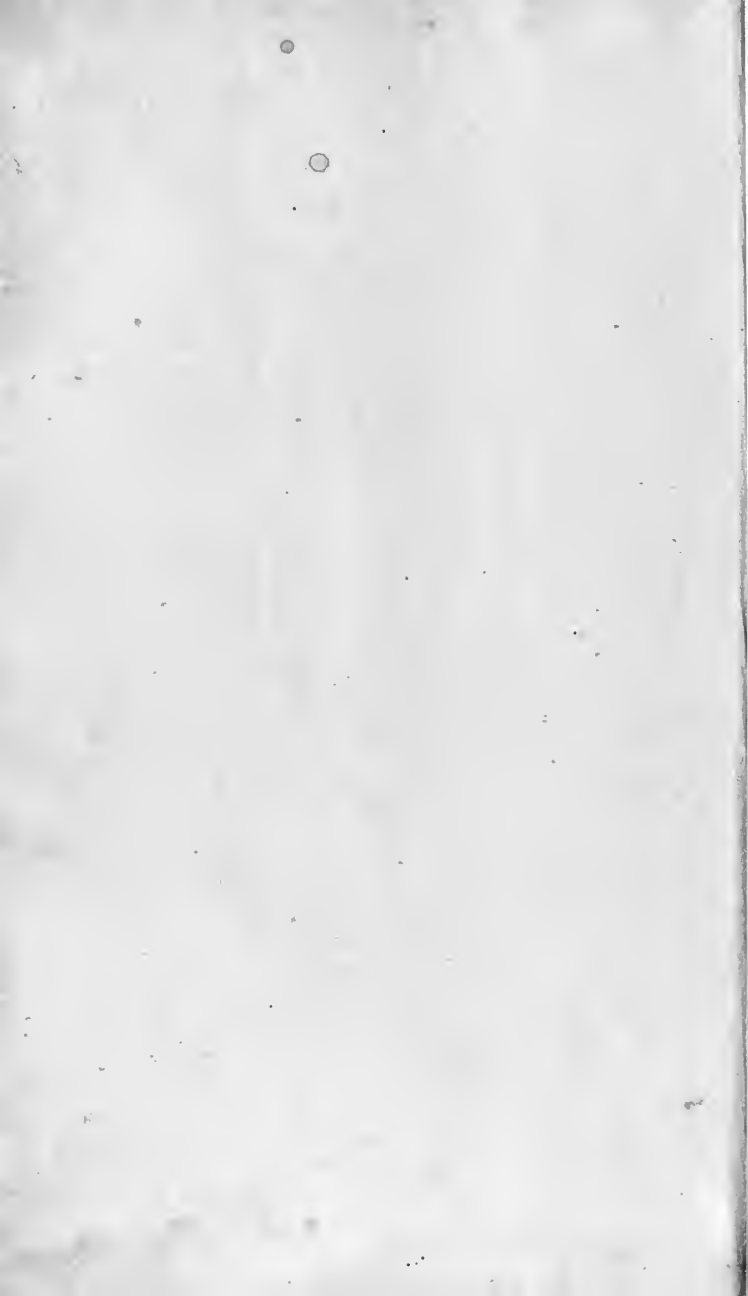
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